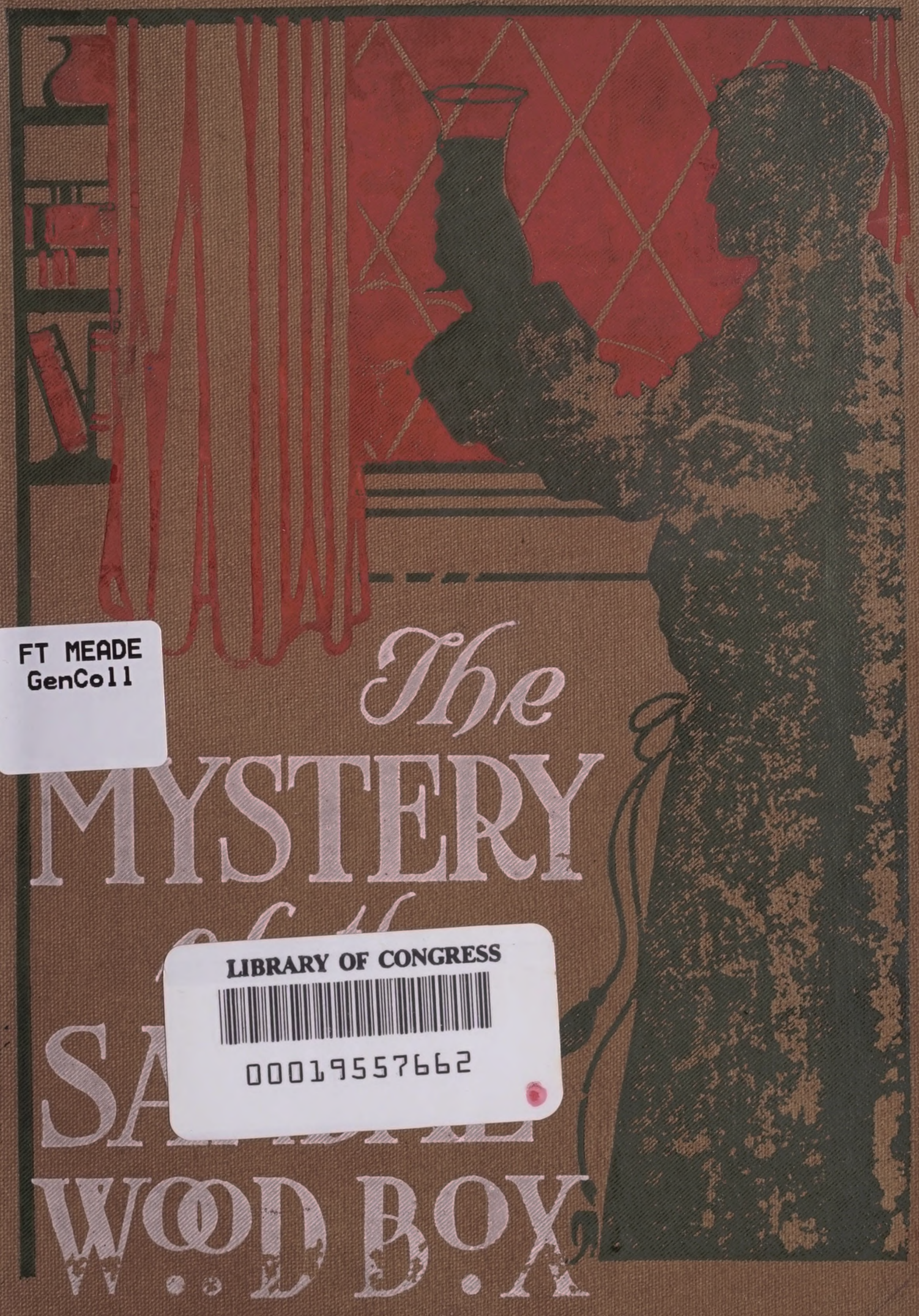


FT MEADE
GenColl

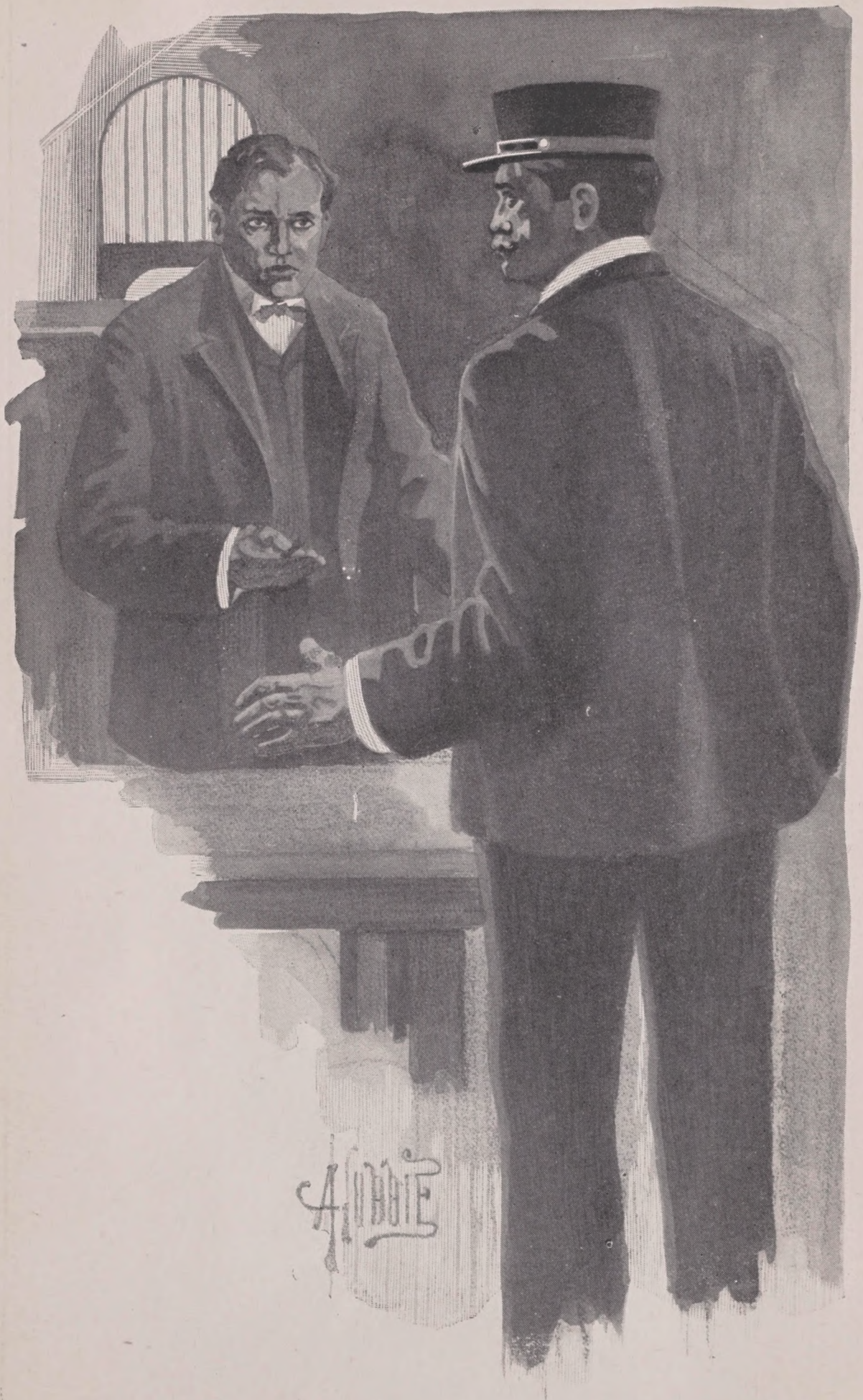
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0001955766 2

Class PZ3

Book .B256M

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



THE MYSTERY

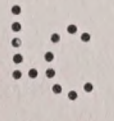
OF THE

SANDAL-WOOD BOX

BEING AN ADVENTURE OF HARLAN NIMS
THE AMATEUR AMERICAN
DETECTIVE

BY

Melville Clemens Barnard



1907
MAYHEW PUBLISHING CO.
BOSTON

PZ3
B256M

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
APR 3 1908
Copyright Entry
Mar 23 1908
CLASS A XXc. No.
202406
COPY B.

COPYRIGHTED, 1907

BY

MELVILLE CLEMENS BARNARD

08-11708

Dedication.

TO ALL OF MY
FRIENDS
BEHIND THE BARS
IN THE
DIFFERENT BANKING INSTITUTIONS
OF THIS COUNTRY——
HONEST IN DETAIL
UNSWERVING IN LOYALTY
AND
EVER TO BE FOUND
AT THEIR
POST OF DUTY——
I
A MEMBER OF
THE
B. O. A.
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBE
THIS VOLUME.

Index.

CHAPTER I.

The Robbery of Mrs. Stokes. 1

CHAPTER II.

The Director's Story. 6

CHAPTER III.

A Manipulation in Stocks. 8

CHAPTER IV.

Murder. 12

CHAPTER V.

The Force of Personality. 17

CHAPTER VI.

Nims Disagrees with the Boston Detectives. . . . 21

CHAPTER VII.

Sizing up One of the "Professionals." 26

CHAPTER VIII.

The Little Dwarf Man. 30

CHAPTER IX.

In the Laboratory. 33

CHAPTER X.

The President Receives a Caller. 38

CHAPTER XI.

The Liberality of Congressman Hart. 41

CHAPTER XII.
An Interview with Boston Bank Officials. . . . 43

CHAPTER XIII.
Slocum Booms Mabel Consolidated. 45

CHAPTER XIV.
Foster on Present Bank Methods. 48

CHAPTER XV.
A Tom Harris Advertisement. 51

CHAPTER XVI.
The Visit to a Notorious Note Broker. 54

CHAPTER XVII.
The Spite of a "Red Devil." 57

CHAPTER XVIII.
A Battle of Giants. 60

CHAPTER XIX.
By the Hand of Nims. 63

CHAPTER XX.
Briggs and Walker Again in the Lime-light. . . . 67

CHAPTER XXI.
The Little Dwarf Man Re-appears. 70

CHAPTER XXII
In the Laboratory Again. 73

CHAPTER XXIII.
The Simple Life. 78

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Strenuous Life. 80

CHAPTER XXV.

The Robbers' Revenge. 84

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Message From Nims. 88

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Race for Life. 91

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Nims and the Reporter. 94

CHAPTER XXIX.

For The Sake of One. 97

CHAPTER XXX.

Identifying Criminals. 100

Illustrations.

PAGE

FRONTISPIECE. . . . . .

"IN HER HAND SHE HELD A PHOTO, IT WAS THAT OF NIMS TAKEN WHEN HE HAD GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL." . . . 36

"SHE SEEMED DAZED AT WHAT THIS ALL MEANT, BUT BEFORE SHE COULD QUESTION HIM HE HAD GIVEN HER ANOTHER KISS AND PASSED OUT OF THE DOOR." 80

"THERE WAS A FLUTTER OF WINGS, AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE FROM OUTSIDE, A CURSE, A SHOT, THEN SILENCE." . . . 98

CHAPTER I.

The Robbery of Mrs. Stokes.

The bank man finds Saturday a busy day because the bank doors are closed at 12 M. This means that the business man, too, must hasten if he desires to get the funds for his weekly pay-roll from that institution.

Hence, Saturday is familiarly known by the name of "bankers' half-holiday."

Harlan Nims, the bookkeeper, was busy that morning getting out the day's balances. He was a fine-looking fellow of athletic figure, with a strong face, intellectual brow, firm mouth, and a pair of very keen, searching eyes. Educating himself at his own expense, he had been spending his summers in the bank to earn the money necessary to enable him to carry out this desire. He was in his last year at college, where he had taken a special course in chemistry and physics, lines of study in which he was particularly interested. He was also a very deep student of the complex science of criminology, and had made keen and successful deductions in several intricate mysteries which his friend, Leonard Hall, the detective, had made good use of, and which had caused him to exclaim one day, "Nims, you would make your mark as a professional."

To which Nims had replied casually, "Oh, perhaps some day I will drift into it. I am certainly very much interested in it as an amateur."

Just then the clock struck ten, and Nims at the same moment finished getting out his balances. He laid down his pen, stretched his arms and yawned, then turned around to speak to the paying teller regarding an overdraft in one of the accounts. As he did so his eye was attracted by a man who had entered the bank, but not with the general rush and hurry which characterizes the business man who realizes that bank doors on Saturday are closed at noon.

Apparently he was in no hurry, and glanced around with a concentration that seemed to take in everything. In his hand he carried what looked like a lawyer's bag.

"The electrician," was Nims' careless thought, as the new-comer dis-

appeared in the washroom. Nevertheless, he felt a certain unaccountable attraction and interest in him. Immediately, however, his attention was directed towards the window, as a coupe drawn by a magnificent span of bays rolled up to the door, both men on the box being in livery. The footman descended, opened the door, and Nims exclaimed to himself:

"Why, it's Mrs. Stokes! I wonder why she comes to-day instead of her husband."

Mrs. Stokes, the wife of the owner of the principal cotton mill in Granby, came bustling up the stairs, all out of breath, whether from her climb or the importance of her mission, no one knew. She informed the paying teller in a whisper that could be heard all over the bank that Mr. Stokes had been taken ill suddenly and adding "He wanted me to get the money for the pay-roll for the operators in the mill," passed the usual weekly check over the counter.

The paying teller turned it over carefully and then said mildly, "If you will kindly endorse the check, I will be glad to accommodate you."

"How stupid of me to forget," rejoined Mrs. Stokes, nervously, as she stepped over to the little side desk, and endorsed it,— upside down, as all good women generally do.

She soon returned, presented it again, and the paying teller counted her out an amount covering the pay-roll for the Jefferson Mills. After spending about fifteen minutes in fingering and re-fingering the bills, Mrs. Stokes finally agreed that her count coincided with that of the paying teller, and disappeared down the stairs with an air of importance.

At the same moment Nims' attention was attracted by the stranger whom he had noticed some time before. Soon after Mrs. Stokes had left the man stepped to the writing desk, removed his hat, picked up a pen, and put it behind his ear, glancing hurriedly around as he did so, stepped into the hall and disappeared.

A moment later he returned with the bag still in his hand, walked coolly to the desk, picked up his hat, and crossing the room, descended to the street by means of the elevator in the rear.

Five minutes later the Stokes' footman approached the paying teller and demanded to know how much longer Mrs. Stokes was to be kept waiting.

"What!" exclaimd the paying teller, stopping the counting of the bills he was just about to pay out, his head poised in midair and echoing the question, "How much longer is she to be kept *waiting?*"

"Yes, sir," replied that worthy.

"Tell Mrs. Stokes," indignantly returned the paying teller, his face reddening, "that she need not wait any longer for *me*, as I cashed her check some time ago, and she verified the count."

The footman disappeared, but soon returned with his mistress. She had lost her air of importance and self-complacency and had assumed one of righteous indignation and unconcealed anger.

"I'll have you understand, sir," she began, glaring at the perplexed paying teller, "that my demands, whether presented in person or by my servant, are to be attended to."

Her voice rose till it filled the room and attracted the attention of both President Stone and Cashier Preston. Both started immediately for the seat of trouble — the paying teller's window. Bank men know the value of good clients and the Jefferson Mills' account was one of their largest. They did not care to have it withdrawn.

The approach of the brisk and business-like cashier and the dignified president seemed to pacify the indignant lady somewhat. She decided not to be too severe in her arraignment of the paying teller, who was plainly getting old, and whose place would probably soon be taken by another.

To the united inquiry of the two she replied that she might have been a little vexed, but did not see why it should be necessary for the paying teller to keep her waiting so long, as it could have been only a moment's work for him to recount the pay-roll funds she had just received from him.

Both turned towards that individual. He was the picture of blank amazement.

"Recount the pay-roll," he exclaimed, "why should I recount it? Did you not agree with me?"

"Yes, I know I did," returned the lady, "but if you did not want to recount it, why did you send down for it?"

"Madam," he replied, quietly, "you are mistaken, I did not ask for a recount."

The look she gave the paying teller in return cannot be described.

President Stone here interposed, however, and said smoothly, "Will you kindly give me details, and we will gladly straighten matters out."

The president had a marvellous way of dealing with people and settling difficulties that won for him the admiration and respect of all.

"Certainly," was the immediate response. "I had just entered my carriage and prepared to return, when one of the clerks came down stairs and said that the paying teller had made an error in counting out the pay-roll, and he asked me if I would kindly let him have it for a moment, and yet, when I sent my footman up here for it, he practically denied having received it."

"Are the clerks all here, Preston?" inquired President Stone of his companion.

The cashier glanced around and replied presently, "Yes, sir. Even the messenger has not started on his route."

"Now, Mrs. Stokes," said the president, turning towards her, "I want to ask you one question. Could you identify the clerk who obtained the pay-roll?"

"I could," was her positive reply.

"Will you kindly point out which clerk approached you for it?"

Mrs. Stokes carefully studied each face, then shook her head —"Not one of these."

"Are you sure it was some one connected with this institution?" again queried the president.

"He must have been," declared Mrs. Stokes helplessly, "he was bareheaded and — "

"But that" — interposed the president.

"And had a pen behind his ear," she added, as conclusive proof.

"Just a moment," exclaimed Nims, who, perched on his stool had been an interested listener, and who now jumped down and came outside the wire enclosure. "I guess I can give you the solution of the whole matter" — and he told what he had observed.

"It's an old trick," added Nims. "I heard of something of the same kind happening in a bank in England."

That evening when Nims was in the wash-room cleaning out his ink-

wells, and filling them for Monday's business — which was his custom every Saturday night,— he picked up a small instrument that looked something like a cartridge with a long needle point, saying to himself exultantly, "I believe I've got a clue." Later, as he wended his way homeward, thinking over the exciting events of the day, he asked himself the question, "Why had this man appeared in the bank on such a busy day as Saturday?" The cashier and president to a similar query from him had answered, "To rob Mrs. Stokes," but this did not solve the matter for Nims. No one had known that Mrs. Stokes would come that day to the bank, even the bank officers not having been notified by 'phone, and Mrs. Stokes herself had announced that her husband had suddenly entrusted her with the duty.

"The thief simply took advantage of his opportunity, that's all," deducted Nims. "He had other plans laid but seeing a chance to do a sneak act had resorted to an old trick. We will hear from him again soon," said Nims, and he was not mistaken.

CHAPTER II.

The Director's Story.

"The man was a miserable sneak thief," declared the president in conversation with one of the directors later. "The case is already in the hands of the police."

They were seated in the spacious dining room of the Stone mansion, having just finished the usual elaborate and rather formal dinner and pushed back their chairs for a quiet smoke and chat.

Helen, his daughter, had been hostess, but when the meal was over had left the two to their cigars.

Naturally their conversation turned to the robbery of Mrs. Stokes.

"Sneak thief, no doubt," replied the other, upholding the belief of the older man. Then, getting reminiscent, he added:

"The only experience I ever had with such fellows happened almost fifteen years ago — before I came to Granby. It was on the day of my daughter Eva's wedding. She and her mother had planned quite a function, and had ordered a fruit cake of the local caterer to help grace the occasion. It was agreed that I should get it, and to that end she supplied me with a large but strong paste-board box, fearing the caterer might not have one heavy enough for it. I had a tin box in which I carried valuable papers quite frequently between my office and the bank, and on the morning in question had planned to take it for that purpose, having been negotiating for a piece of property, the papers regarding which were to be signed that day. The owner of this property was a practical old fellow who did not believe in banks, looked suspiciously at notes and checks, and wanted his pay in the coin of the realm. I thought afterwards what a comical figure I must have made going along Main Street with a paste-board box in one hand and a tin one in the other."

"On my way to the bank I stopped in at the caterer's and asked for the cake. When produced it would not fit the box the folks had provided. Then I offered the tin box, which was empty, of course, as I had not reached the bank, and lo! it fitted to a 'T.' This tickled me, as I had used it

for everything but wedding cake! Then I dropped into the bank and got my bills. The question arose about where I should put them, and as my office was not far off, I decided it was safe enough to put them in the empty paste-board box, and let it go at that.

"Well, I left the bank, and had almost reached my office in safety, when I got a smash on the head, and went down and out. The next thing I knew I was at the Police Station with my old physician bending over me.

"'Where's my box?' I demanded, desperately.

"'What,' replied the doctor, 'the tin one?'

"'I mean the paste-board one,' I declared.

"'Ha! ha!' laughed the doctor. 'You're a good sport all right,' and turning to the officers near by, he said, 'Brown thinks more of his wife's bonnet than he does of his own securities.'

"Then the chief explained. Said I had been knocked down by two footpads. He had suddenly come around the corner some distance back and had seen me with the two boxes in my hands. Had noticed I was followed and hurried up to assist, but too late. Had seen me knocked down and the fellows run off with my tin box. Said I had hung like grim death to the other one. Then he added kindly:

"'I hope you did not lose much, Mr. Brown. May I ask what the box contained?'

"'Certainly,' I replied. 'It was full of—'

"'That's too bad!' he exclaimed, before I could finish.

"'Wedding cake,' I added. The man gazed at me curiously. He had a sort of look of pity. Perhaps he thought the assault had affected my mind.

"'Bring me the bonnet-box, as you call it,' I demanded. It was brought and you can imagine their surprise when I opened it up and out rolled the bills. So I told my story.

"Later the tin box was found thrown away in a ditch and scattered about were bits of Eva's cake. I felt all right an hour after gaining consciousness, and the wedding came off without a hitch, but of course we did not have the original cake we had ordered."

CHAPTER III.

A Manipulation in Stocks.

Two weeks previous to the incidents narrated in the preceding chapters, two men, Congressman Hart and Charles Slocum, President of the Mabel Consolidated Copper Company, met in conference in the private office of the company, the door of which was locked. Orders had been given if either were asked for to reply, "Not in."

"Our heaviest stockholder is President Stone of the First National Bank of Granby," declared Hart, "Should he sell out his holdings through his local broker in order to realize immediate profits it would ruin our proposition."

The careful student of Finance knows that the great wealth of the country is produced by fertile Mother Earth. The great western farms produce food for the nation and the deep mines its metal values,— gold, silver, copper, lead, etc.

Mining is as legitimate as banking and when conducted on right principles, safer and sounder, paying larger dividends — aye, but there's the rub.

The Mabel Consolidated Copper Company was an excellent proposition. Ore had been produced which showed up well on the proof sheets. and with the installation of a good-sized smelter great returns were confidently expected by the stockholders.

But the control had been bought out by a gang of sharpers who saw here a chance only of putting it on the stock market to boom it and then unload their own holdings, reaping a small fortune ere it settled back to where it belonged.

In the early part of its history, President Stone invested considerable money in this enterprise, and as he saw it grow had increased his holdings.

This was due somewhat to the persuasions of Congressman Hart, who had used his political position as means to an end.

Harlan Nims had many times acted as the president's private secretary, and when in Boston had given many buying orders to his broker.

Few people realize that bank men are investors. It is true, however. That they do not advise their depositors to invest, however, is also true. Why should they? It means reducing their deposits and leaving less money available for the directors to invest in reliable stocks for the benefit of the stockholders of the bank.

They prefer, if necessary, to pay two per cent interest on accounts whose daily balances average over $1,000 than to have such accounts withdrawn.

Booming a listed stock is not always an easy matter, as the stock market is made up of both bulls and bears — and the bears must be reckoned with. But things had gone along swimmingly. The bears were unable to stop Mabel Consolidated in its upward flight.

But Hart had just received some valuable data. One of the most noted bears, though known as an outside operator, Tom Harris, had got some inside information and planned to stop the meteoric career of this security.

Hart had expected trouble from this quarter and long before, with marvellous foresight, had laid his plans. One of the clerks in the promoter's office was but one of Hart's puppets.

He received a salary from both Hart and Harris. Let the reader picture to himself the man who can descend so low as to draw a salary from one who has hired him in good faith and yet who takes a bribe from another to play the part of spy. Can he be called *a man?* No, rather a sneak — a mongrel cur.

What then may be said for *him* who would, for the sake of a few paltry thousands bend to such damnable methods for obtaining information of value, using his high office to cloak a blackened character? Is he not worse — aye, a thousand times so?

Hart looked around cautiously and then, lowering his voice, said, "Peters, my man, informed me yesterday that Tom Harris is planning an attack on the Mabel. He felt something in the air, and has been the last to leave each night for the past month. Last evening, pretending to be busy with his books, he waited till all the other clerks had gone and again

went into Tom's private office. Tom had been there all day, contrary to his usual custom. Peters smelt a rat and waited. This time he was successful. In the waste paper basket were a number of bits of torn paper. It was simply the first draft of an announcement he is planning to spring on the public at the right psychological moment. It took Peters all the rest of the night at home to solve the puzzle by piecing the bits together, but he has succeeded," and he passed to his companion the patched-up result.

It was headed

MABEL CONSOLIDATED INVESTORS
WARNING.

The two men pored over the sheet together.

"It means this, Hart," declared the president, "we've got to have money at once at any rate of interest or on any terms. Just as soon as the stockholder unloads we've got to snap up his holdings."

"But supposing we can't do it," replied Hart.

"We *must*, there is no such word as can't," replied the other, "we must beg, borrow, or steal it."

"And another thing —"

"I'll write up a good article as a news item of a big strike made on our property. My press agent can get it credited as legitimate news. I will also get Cannon, who runs a financial paper here that is Bible to lots of Boston investors, to run a long column about it. He'll do it for *me*," and laughed as he winked an eye at his companion.

A few hours later a tall man stopped in the hallway before the outside door of an office which bore the words:

A. LEVY & LOW,
NOTE BROKERS.

He paused a moment, then opening the door entered the room, greeted its occupant, and soon made his mission known — the negotiation of a large loan to be made inside of a month.

"It is too short a time," replied the other, "not in six months could I raise it."

"But I must have it," insisted the tall individual.

"It will cost you considerable," replied the Jew.

"What's your terms?"

The Jew leaned over and whispered in his ear.

"Never," replied the tall man, then, as he calmed himself, "well, all right, I have got to have the stuff whether I beg, borrow or steal it," and he left the office.

CHAPTER IV.

MURDER.

MONDAY morning Nims rose with the sun. He had planned to get to the bank earlier than usual, as it was near the end of the month, and that meant getting out bank statements.

This was also his last day with that institution. For the last five years he had simply supplied during vacation time when the bank was short handed.

That the officials considered his services invaluable was shown by the pressure brought to bear at frequent intervals to get him to consider a permanent position — even if they were obliged to create one for him.

To all such proffers, however, he simply shook his head, and although he thanked them with feeling for their expressions of good will, he still believed that his lifework lay in another direction — that of a profession.

His father, before his death, had laid aside each year a certain amount for this specific purpose. "I want the lad to have a college education," he told his wife, "and then he may choose for himself his special profession."

Nims had been true to the wishes of his father and by working part of the time during the spare moments, while in college, and filling a clerkship in the bank during the summer, had reduced very little the sum his father had laid by for that purpose.

As he approached the bank, he was surprised to see that the massive front door was not opened as was customary at that hour.

"Perhaps the janitor has overslept," he said to himself.

Pulling out his bunch of keys he started to open the door but found that there was something wrong with the lock.

Suspecting something amiss, he called the policeman at the corner, and together they tried the door, but it was impossible to force an entrance.

They walked around the bank till they came to a window in the rear, which they found open a few inches.

"Wait a minute," said the policeman, and hastening across the street to the Engine House of the Fire Department, which was directly opposite, he soon returned, carrying a short ladder. By means of it they were able to enter and then what a sight met their eyes!

Stretched out on the cold marble floor lay the janitor, dead. Not very far from him was a pool of blood which had been tracked about somewhat.

These bloody footprints led down the stairs towards the main entrance. They were peculiar in shape, suggesting that one of the burglars was barefooted.

The vault had been blown open, the robbers doubtless making a goodly haul.

Harlan Nims telephoned for the president and cashier of the bank, and at the suggestion of the officer, for the Chief of Police.

When they had arrived they held a hurried consultation, and as it was expected the bank would open inside of an hour, after a careful examination of the rooms, if was decided to have the body removed to the rooms of an undertaker nearby.

The president then said, "Nims, would you mind washing up this blood, so that it will not alarm any of our lady depositors?"

"Not in the least," replied Nims, and he set about it the more willingly because of a purpose of his own. The president directed his attention to an inspection of the safe. Nims spent considerable time in washing up a few footprints and a little pool of blood — at least so thought the president. But had he watched the bookkeeper he would have learned the reason of his delay.

Nims first went to his locker, called by his comrades-in-arms "The Laboratory," got a small vial, several pieces of tissue paper and a big crayon. He collected some of the blood in the vial, smoothed the tissue paper down on the footprints with his crayon and made a tracing as an artist often does a drawing. With marvellous patience he made not one tracing, but several, each taken from a different part of the room. Then getting out the dead janitor's pail and floor mop, he started in with all due speed to wipe out the last damning evidence of murder.

In one corner, as he moved about, busy at his gruesome task, he caught

sight of a number of faint splashes on the tiling, while near them lay a small fragment of soiled paper tightly curled. Nims pounced upon this with all the zest of a prospector seeking for indications of gold, and a hurried investigation revealed it to be a piece of label from a bottle, the dry mucilage on one side causing it to curve. Smoothing it out carefully, he found upon it four letters, h-i-n-e, the ending, he suspected, of the word "morphine." The marks and the letters together told him the whole story. Rising, he tucked the paper in his pocket, exclaiming softly to himself, "more clues," and resumed his work.

After he had made the place look presentable he hurried away to look over the ground carefully in the vicinity of the window through which the robbers had effected their entrance.

The bank stood by itself. One could walk completely around it. This was done as a precaution. The nearest buildings to it were the two large blocks on either side whose lower floors were made for stores. The window in question, however, opened into a good-sized back yard that constituted the rear of several big business blocks forming the square of which the bank building was a part.

"Lucky I got here early," mused Nims to himself, "or I'd never had a chance to nose around here."

While the ladder was what the policemen had called a "short" one, it was considerably taller than was the window in height from the ground, and the bottom end had to be set out at least six feet from the building. This certainly was fortunate, for had it been otherwise any evidence of value would have been obliterated by the heavy sole and heel of the policeman.

"Everything ought to be intact then," thought Nims, as he bent down carefully to examine the ground. There he saw footprints plainly stamped in the soft soil. He noted two kinds, one that was made by a medium-sized shoe, long, narrow and slightly pointed; the other broad and flat, but no evidence to show either had entered the bank *bare footed.* The tracings, however, that had been so successful in the building, were impracticable here, as the footprints were so deeply embedded in the soil.

But at length Nims hit upon a scheme. He returned to the street,

entered a hardware store and bought some plaster of paris. Getting a tin pail, he mixed up a considerable quantity to a workable consistency, and gently filled up the best impression he could find. The plaster almost instantly hardened and in a few minutes he had the shape and outline he wanted. Re-entering the bank he added these bits of plaster to the other evidence he had collected, put them in his locker and was soon back on his high stool getting out balances.

In the meantime, the president upon examination found that the inner vault had not been touched by the burglars. This caused considerable satisfaction to him. True, he honestly regretted the loss of his watchman, and was justly indignant that such an outrage had been perpetrated within the sacred precincts of the First National Bank, but he had been so accustomed to looking at everything from a monetary point of view, that his *first* feeling was one of extreme satisfaction that the bank had not been looted.

A reaction, however, set in when he was informed of the lost package that had come containing $30,000 by the late express from the First Consolidated Bank and had been left in the outer vault as it had been received too late to be put into the inner, that being closed by the cashier several hours previous.

On that same afternoon the following news on the front page of *The Granby Times*, the only daily in the city, attracted great attention. It was headed as follows:

"FIRST NATIONAL BANK
OF GRANBY
ROBBED.
FRANK PALMER
JANITOR
MURDERED."

Then followed: "A great sensation was caused in this town this morning by the discovery made at the bank by Mr. Harlan Nims and Charles Belmont of the police force.

"Mr. Nims, it seems, started early for the bank, wishing to do a little extra work previous to the routine business of the day, and was surprised to find the outside door at the main entrance of the bank not open as was customary at that time in the morning. Unable to gain entrance he called to his assistance Charles Belmont, and together they succeeded in effecting an entrance by means of a rear window, which they found unlocked. Not only did they find that robbery had been committed, but also made the startling discovery that the watchman who had served so faithfully had been foully murdered.

"After a hurried consultation of President Stone and Cashier Preston, the body of the unfortunate man was removed to the undertaking room of John Webb across the street.

"A large pool of blood showed that the janitor had doubtless been stabbed, while the way his clothes were torn and the expression on his face, which even death could not efface, showed that he had made a brave and desperate struggle for his life. He had doubtless been aroused by hearing a noise in the rear of the bank, and while investigating the cause had been attacked by some ruffian and the gallant defender had fallen in the fray.

"President Stone, authorized by the Board of Directors, has offered a reward of $5,000 in gold for the arrest and conviction of these looters. They have also telephoned for two of the best detectives in Boston to come on and see what can be done. *It is deemed well to announce to the depositors that while considerable money was stolen from the bank, the bank is solvent and able to do business, the burglar or burglars having been frightened off without gaining entrance to the inner safe where the real collateral of the bank was kept.*"

Considerable comment was caused that evening when it was announced in a later edition that upon examination no mark of violence was found upon the body of the janitor.

This significant fact excited much discussion among its readers, some arguing that he had been poisoned.

Later, Boston detectives arrived, and carefully examined the evidence and the body at the undertaker's.

CHAPTER V.

The Force of Personality.

The excitement which followed the discovery of the morning delayed business and kept the bank force working overtime that fatal Monday.

All sorts of reports had been circulated throughout the length and breadth of Granby, and up to the time of the appearance of the *Granby Times* at noon, with its special statement of assurance issued by the directors, a crowd of white-faced, wild-eyed depositors had poured into the bank, anxious to learn the facts of the case and in some cases to draw out their savings.

President Stone was a man of marvellous foresight and unlimited resources.

He reasoned early that morning that this unfortunate affair would be the means of spreading all sorts of ugly and distorted rumors about the country which would not be without its effect. He had never studied psychology, but he did what a student of that science would do. He knew that a large proportion of his depositors were hard-headed and uncompromising, and that if an idea once got into their heads it would be immovable. Ultra-conservative people, they believed only what they could *see*, *taste* or *handle*.

These he knew would be the ones who would come with one definite purpose — that of creating a "run on the bank," reasoning that if they were not "first in line" ready to draw out their balances, some one else would be, and that on their arrival they would find nothing remaining for themselves.

Here is where the president showed his consummate genius. Immediately he dispatched one of the messengers under the protection of an officer to Medway Bank with a large New York check to be exchanged for bills. Then he ordered the paying tellers' department to bring out of the safe all the bills they had and pile them up on the counter where they might remain in sight of all. This in addition to what the Medway Bank sent.

"Appearances count," he said to himself, as he viewed tier after tier of greenbacks, bank bills, silver and gold certificates. Then his eye fell upon the acting teller. The regular paying teller had left on his vacation Saturday and his assistant was now temporarily filling his place.

A brilliant thought struck him.

"Jim," he said, lowering his voice, "I think the affair of the morning may precipitate a run on this institution There's been a lot of gossip flying around, so I understand. Here are my orders. Pay all regular checks, but if any parties attempt to take their name off the book, pretend you don't know them and ask them to get the president to O. K. their drafts."

The president had planned well.

A crowd of excited men and women soon poured into the bank. It was almost amusing to watch them. Their first glance after entering was in the direction of the vault, as though they half-expected to see a great dark cavity where once had been the bank depository. Their next glance was directed towards the paying teller's window, and they looked in astonishment. There stood the assistant, leisurely cashing the checks that were being presented, while piled about him were *bills*, *bills*, *bills*. Let us imagine the scene.

Mrs. Brown, fair, fat, and forty, stepped to the paying teller's window. She was the wife of a farmer living five miles away, who had always kept a small check account in the bank. Business the past year had been exceedingly good and they had now quite a tidy little sum on deposit there. On that morning she had heard alarming stories. Her husband, unable to go to the bank, hitched up the horse for her, signed a check in blank and instructed her, after investigation, to get the amount of his balance from the bookkeeper, fill in the check, and present it.

Up hill and down, through the long sandy stretches or the muddy portions, the same rate of speed was maintained. The whip rested on poor Ned's back the whole distance. She felt herself a sort of female Paul Revere, for as she rode by any farmhouse she shouted a note of warning which roused the inmates and filled their hearts with consternation. They followed suit.

Presently, arrived at her destination and red in the face from exertion and excitement, she presented the precious bit of paper.

The teller glanced first at the check to note the signature and the amount, then at the lady.

"I know the signature, but do I know you?" he asked, scanning her face carefully.

"Well, you ought to," she snapped ungraciously.

"But," he explained, "you see I am only supplying. The regular teller is away. Perhaps you met *him*. It will be necessary for you to be identified —

"What is the trouble?" and as the grave and dignified president courteously interrupted their conversation, he extended his hand.

"Why, how do you do, Mrs. Brown! Quite a stranger — eh? You are early this morning — shopping, I presume?"

Then to the paying teller — "Why, certainly, this check is all right. Pay it by all means."

Mrs. Brown, calmer in spite of herself, chatted awhile with the president, mentioning presently rather unconcernedly that she had heard a *faint* rumor of some *slight* robbery that had been committed at the First National Bank. The president laughed pleasantly. Was he conscious of the whole line of listening depositors? Apparently he was talking to her.

"Yes, there was robbery committed, but it was a very slight one. The burglars seem to have been frightened away before they did any real damage.

"Though they rifled the outer safe and obtained a few bills that had come in too late Saturday night to be put in the inner one, the money vault was intact. The only unfortunate part was the death of the janitor who had fought their attempts to gain entrance."

The crowd seemed to crumble away unaccountably. Many who had been waiting in line dropped out and crushing bits of paper in their pockets, went on to business.

Had they heard the president, and had he wanted them to?

We don't know, but we do know that after this little talk Mrs. Brown failed to present her check again. And there were others.

So it went on all that day. The president was here and there, striking some friend on the back, laughing at the rumors they told him they had heard and reassuring all, and when night came only two accounts had been taken off the books. A large number having withdrawn their balances had returned rather shamefaced an hour or two later to re-deposit same.

It was simply the personality of one man that saved the day. He had overcome prejudice by reason and changed a feeling of panic to one of confidence.

CHAPTER VI.

Nims Disagrees with the Boston Detectives.

As Harlan Nims was preparing to leave for home that evening he noticed President Stone coming his way across the room. As he passed the bookkeeper's desk, he leaned over it, and said, "Mr. Nims, I would be pleased to have you come up to my house tomorrow evening, as the detectives are to make a report. You may be able to aid them."

Mr. Nims said he would be very glad indeed to be present. There were a number of reasons why he liked to call at "Sunnyside," the president's home. One was his interest in the daughter of the house. To him Helen Stone was the only girl in the wide world. They had been brought up together, gone to the same school, and although he had been away to college and had met many other girls, he knew it was her likeness alone that was engraved on his heart.

President Stone had noticed Nim's interest in her, but believed it was one resulting from a friendly acquaintanceship. He would have opposed anything that appeared to be more serious.

As she would inherit all his property, his death would make her very wealthy. He did not consider Nims her equal from a financial point of view, for he looked at all things through gold-rimmed glasses. Such a girl would make a brilliant match for some wealthy man's son, and he looked with more favor upon the attention bestowed by the young Congressman Hart, who had made a name for himself at the Capitol, and was considered an excellent catch in Washington by all the mammas with marriageable daughters.

Of course, Helen was not consulted in this case. She had her own ideas, however. Recently, at one of the leading society events in Granby, she had showed rather a decided preference for the company of Harlan Nims.

"Money is not everything," she said quietly to one of her girl friends who was bewailing the fact that she was not rich like some girls. "There are many things that money cannot buy."

Perhaps one reason she appeared to enjoy Nims' company was due to the fact that she admired his frank and open manner.

He had always been that way as far back as she could remember, and she felt down in her warm little heart that if Harlan Nims had any serious regard for her, her money could cut little figure in the case.

In fact, his decided coolness a great many times made her reason that perhaps he feared that she might think he was more attracted towards her wealth than towards her own personality.

Yes, Nims felt considerable pleasure on receiving this invitation to the house of the President, for besides listening to the theories advanced by the detectives he trusted that he would have the chance, as well, of seeing Helen.

Helen had been an enthusiastic student along the lines that he was interested in, and had followed out some of his deductions, and that night surprised her father by asking if she might not be present. "Why don't you engage Harlan Nims to do your work?" she said. "I believe that you would find him as good as any Boston detective." Her father's eyes twinkled and he playfully tweaked her little shell-like ear, as he answered, with a smile, "We want men of experience on that case and not amateurs, honey, but you are a bright girl, and if you want to be present I think it will be all right."

When Nims arrived he was cordially greeted, and on entering the parlor found it quite full of people. He was immediately introduced to Briggs and Walker, the celebrated detectives from Boston, and shook hands with Watts, Chief of Police of Granby, whom he knew well.

Mr. Briggs, the older of the two detectives, acted as spokesman, and rubbed his hands together briskly and said with a very satisfied smile, "Gentlemen, this is one of the most interesting cases that I have seen. It bears all the earmarks of professional robbers, and the ground is being looked over very carefully.

"While we regret that we did not come upon the scene before the body was removed, we believe that we can give you in outline the general plan of action of these criminals. We notice that entrance was made by a window in the rear, that a ladder had doubtless been put up, and one of the robbers, after forcing the window, had entered.

"Startled by the sound of a window opening and closing the watchman hastened in that direction. He was, no doubt, surprised by the robber, and as we do not find any marks of violence on his body, doubtless chloroformed and drugged.

"That he made a desperate struggle is accounted for by the pools of blood which have been described to us and the bloody tracks. The latter were, no doubt, those of the watchman's assailant, who then descended the stairs to let his pal or pals in and they proceeded to loot the bank."

It was certainly a very plausible and reasonable theory, but it did not suit Mr. Nims. As the detective proceeded his face became more and more perplexed, but no one noticed except Miss Stone, who observed sweetly, "Mr. Nims, I am afraid, does not agree with your theories."

"Perhaps not," Mr. Briggs spoke patronizingly, "It is often hard for the ordinary layman to follow the reasonings of the professional detective."

"I presume so," replied Helen, with the same sweet intonation, but her peculiar inflection was lost on every one but Nims.

"To continue," said the officer, "I have an announcement which I believe will more than please some of you.

"Gentlemen," he added impressively, "we have one of the criminals in the lockup at this present moment.

"You will remember that on Saturday last we had a good moon up to about 12 o'clock, when it clouded over and we had quite a fall of rain. Well, it seems that Bangs, reporter of your town paper, *The Times*, planned a canoe trip up the river with a party of friends.

"He had been pretty busy and somewhat delayed, and to save time, when he started for the boat-house, made use of several short cuts. One of these led close to the rear end of the bank. He noticed close to that building a little Jew peddler with his tray of collar buttons, studs, suspenders, etc.

"He thought little of it at that time, but after the robbery he at once reported the circumstances to me.

"An alarm was sent out, and as the fellow is quite a familiar figure here, he was easily located in the next town, where he was pursuing his usual profession. We searched him and found two ten dollar bills upon his

person. These were bills which were issued by the First National Bank of Granby, Conn., which he said some one had given to him. We believe, however, he is one of the culprits or at least an accessory. After we put him through 'the third degree,' we shall be able to clear up much of this mystery."

"Will you pardon me," it was Nims who spoke, "if I ask a few questions for my own enlightenment?"

"Certainly," was the officer's reply.

"First — Is there any connection between the robbery of Mrs. Stokes and the Bank robbery?" queried Nims.

"None whatever," replied the officer. "One was the work of a sneak thief, the other of a professional."

"Second — If one of the men entered by the window, which I doubt, what was the need of his tracking blood all the way down stairs to let his other assistants in? Why couldn't they come in the same way as he did? Why wouldn't they be apt to, especially when he got in a fight with the watchman?"

At this sally, Walker, the younger of the detectives, sat up and looked keenly at the young man. It was the first time he had noticed him. "It is impossible," replied Briggs, "to answer that question for this reason — no one knows what was working in the man's mind. It might have been a safeguard. Perhaps he thought some policeman might see the ladder and ascend and surprise them. Here then was another exit."

It certainly sounded plausible.

"Third and last," said Nims, "I think I know the Jew peddler you speak of by sight, and cannot see what he has to do with the robbery for these reasons: He is too well known in town; he was found in the next town plying his trade, instead of hundreds of miles away; the bank was not robbed till some time Sunday."

Both detectives started.

"How do you know the bank was not robbed until Sunday — why not Saturday?" they both asked.

Every eye was turned towards Nims.

"On your own statement," he said, turning to Briggs.

"You are certainly marvellous in deduction, young man," responded

Briggs, rather sarcastically, "kindly inform me your process of reasoning this out."

Nims, however, kept his temper, He felt he had a friend at court and for her sake he would control himself.

"You gave me valuable information, Mr. Briggs," he responded courteously, "which I have overlooked. You said it was moonlight before twelve Saturday, but rainy afterward. If I remember rightly it stopped raining somewhere near two o'clock.

"Here's my point. The bank was robbed after it had stopped raining — some time Sunday.

"How do I know?

"Because the foot-prints I found would have been washed away *previous* to the storm, as the soil is rather clayey. If they had robbed the bank *during* the storm they would have been muddy and sloppy. The foot-prints were clean cut and perfect. Hence, they were made *after* the storm."

"Well," replied Briggs, rising, as he pulled out his watch, "I have an appointment, and must leave. I will not to-night go into discussion of the subject pro and con regarding the guilt of the little Jew peddler, but I have pretty good evidence he is one of the guilty parties. However, young man, wait, time settles all things."

After considerable talking and planning, they all shook hands and bade one another a hearty good night.

Nims was the last one to leave. He shook hands with President Stone, who patted him on the back and said, "Well, my young man, I like you first rate, You will find your clever theories are all right to incorporate in some novel, but of little value when applied to the practical every-day life," and then giving the young man another cordial handshake, he left the room.

But Helen looked at him with starry eyes, though her voice was quiet as she said, "Harlan, I believe that there is truth in your theories. I have known them before to work out right. Don't get discouraged," and giving him a smile of confidence she left him.

CHAPTER VII.

Sizing up One of the "Professionals."

The next morning Harlan Nims decided to go down to the county jail and have a look at Bangs' culprit. He obtained a letter of introduction to the jailer from the Chief of Police who was friendly towards Nims, although skeptical as to his theories of deduction.

He did better — he got that worthy to pin a little badge on his vest which read "*Special Police.*"

"I tell you, chief," he said, "I have just left the bank and expect soon to take up some profession, perhaps that of a chemist. I want to make a try for that $5,000, even if I don't get it. I will be glad to serve as 'Special' for a few weeks and the little badge will help me out considerable."

So he won out.

It was very early in the morning when the jailer met him at the door, invited him in and asked his mission. Nims showed his credentials and explained his errand — an interview with the little Jew peddler.

"I shall be really glad to have you talk with him, Mr. Nims," replied the jailer. Then he added earnestly, "Do you know I feel he ought not to be shut up."

"Why?" queried Nims.

"From the very first I have felt him guiltless," was the response. "Of course the circumstances look suspicious, but is not this history repeating itself? Many a man has been tried and hung on circumstantial evidence, only to have his name vindicated when it was too late, years after by the real culprit admitting his guilt on his death bed.

"We jailers get used to studying men and can size them up pretty well and my opinions are not sudden ones, but are the outcome of a good many years of experience in the study of crime and criminals."

Nims became interested. He won the confidence of the man by stating that he too had been working on the case and believed the little peddler

blameless in the matter and to that end had come down to interview him.

"Before I see him I want to learn what he told you," he added.

"Well," replied the jailer, "I shall be glad to tell you all I know. The little fellow took his arrest badly to heart. He declared his innocence of any such crime again and again. 'I know nodding aboud eet,' he said over and over again, as the tears ran down his cheeks. I told him I knew everything would come out all right, and he seemed quite relieved.

"This is the story he told:

"He admitted he had been in the rear of the bank building Saturday, but it was not the first time.

"Bassett's restaurant has a back entrance which opens into this little square. It is here they receive their supplies. He knew the cook, and when he called he used to give him something to eat."

"But what about these bills found on his person?" queried Nims.

"He told me Saturday night he slept in a freight car, but early Sunday morning was suddenly awakened by a crash. They were coupling cars. Guess he thought the world was coming to an end, for he hollered out, and one of the freight hands found him and turned him out. He learned it was about 4 o'clock, and thinking his old friend, the cook, might be up, as he knew him to be an early riser, he started in the direction of the bank, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. Just as he was about to walk down one of the side-alleys he ran plump into a tall man, who grabbed him with an oath, then seeing who it was, slipped the two bills in his pocket and pulling out a revolver said, 'See that road (it was the old Boston Turnpike) skidoo! If you stop inside an hour, I'll put a bullet through you.'

"I guess the poor fellow thought he was to be followed, for he never stopped till he landed in Medway."

"Did he tell this to the detectives?" added Nims.

"No! he tried to, but Briggs told him to wait till they got ready to hear him."

"Do you suppose he could identify the man who pulled the gun on him Sunday morning?" asked Nims excitedly.

"He says he can," replied the other, "and I believe he can. It was hard understanding all he said. He speaks in a broken English and tried

to give me the name, but I could not make it out. He said if I'd get a horse and carriage he'd show me the way to his house."

"And give us the slip," laughed Nims.

"No! Mr. Nims," was the positive reply. "I don't think he's that kind of a fellow. He said, 'I no run — take all zee poleece you vant.'"

"Mr. Baker," replied Nims, for that was the jailer's name, "I wish you would do me a favor. Just keep what you have told me to yourself, unless, of course, it is positively essential. I am here to vindicate this man. You would like to see him cleared of the charge also. We can work nicely together, but on the quiet. If you tell your tale you'll get the laugh. I am spending my time to prove the truth of your assertions. Is it a go?" he held out his hand.

"It is," said the jailer, shaking the extended hand vigorously. And in that little room a compact of silence was verbally signed, sealed and delivered.

"Now for the little Jew peddler!" exclaimed Nims, delighted with the progress he had made so far.

"All right, my hearty," exclaimed the jailer, and he led the way.

Nims followed. They entered a long corridor, passing cell after cell until they came to cell No. 95. Unlocking the door the jailer stepped in and stopped — a look of horror creeping over his face. There on the floor, stretched out cold and stiff, lay the little Jew peddler — dead.

How had he met his death? There was no mark of violence on his body. Fearing an attempt at suicide he had been carefully searched, and everything he owned, but his wearing apparel, had been taken temporarily away from him.

Nims spent some time in the cell looking it all over. He noticed the little grated window, the heavy granite walls. Then glancing up, his eye was attracted to the peculiar dome-shaped ceiling.

Suddenly, as he looked, he gave an exclamation of surprise and excusing himself for a moment, left the jailer. He returned a little bit later with a small butterfly net in his hands.

"Going to catch your culprit in that?" queried one of the Boston detectives who had just come in, with a grin.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Nims, "perhaps so."

After a few minutes' examination Briggs and Walker left and Nims asked permission to examine the cell carefully, which was readily granted. A few minutes later he passed out with his butterfly net in his hand and a look of astonishment and surprise on his face, but also one of extreme satisfaction.

"*His life was forfeited,*" declared Nims to himself, "*because he knew too much.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

The Little Dwarf Man.

The Dramatic Club of Medway had invited its rival club of Granby to attend its initial performance of the season. As Helen Stone and Harlan Nims were both members of the local organization he had seized this opportunity of requesting the pleasure of her company on this, the opening night of their friendly competitors in Medway, and she had graciously accepted.

Never had Helen seemed so enchantingly beautiful. Her eyes sparkled with animation, the cool autumn air brought a warm glow to her cheeks, and her conversation had never been so charming as on that night. They were cordially received by the members of the Medway Dramatic Club as recognized talented members of their own club.

The play was to be produced in the Medway Opera House. When they arrived there they found the place crowded to the doors. Medway took great pride and interest in these amateur theatricals of its local club and the town turned out en masse whenever a performance took place.

Seats had been previously reserved for them by Congressman Hart, who met them at the door and greeted them cordially, insisted that they share his box. Nims could hardly refuse, although he rather disliked the politician, believing him insincere.

Just before the curtain rose, Nims went behind the scenes. While there something went wrong with the electrical attachments and as he was an expert electrician, he offered to remedy the difficulty. Removing his coat he went to work and in a few minutes had adjusted it satisfactorily and perfectly, but he remained there after the curtain rose to be sure that everything worked as he expected.

As he lingered he glanced out into the audience. It was a brilliant one. — every available seat filled, and the boxes as well.

Franklin Graves, the broker, occupied the lower right hand box. He was a silent man, about whom little was known save that he was a generous

giver to all charitable enterprises and a patron of all entertainments having that end in view.

While he gave his occupation as broker, with an office in Boston, no one knew where it was and no one cared. Suffice it to say that he was considered by every one as an "all-round good fellow."

We are often more interested in the business of the mean and stingy man than in that of the quiet, unobtrusive, but liberal fellow. He was reported to be immensely wealthy and for that reason was considered a splendid catch.

Then as Nims continued to look over the audience, his eye uneasily shifted to the other side, resting at length on the lower left hand one — Hart's box. A little cloud came over his good-natured face as he noted the marked attention that Hart was paying to Helen. One of the members of the cast, hidden from sight in one of the forward wings seemed also to have noticed it, and he remarked to his companion, "The young Congressman seems quite interested, don't he? Brilliant match — both got money — not much show for Nims, eh?"

The reply caused a feeling of gratitude to rush through Nims' veins He only wished he could have thanked his unknown friend. "Yes, that's true, but Nims is an awfully nice fellow. He deserves her. What could we have done without him to-night?"

As Nims sauntered back to Hart's box, he said to himself, "I suppose I'm not in her class. It's money that talks these days, but I do want her and want her bad."

The return drive home was as entrancing as had been the one coming. The moon was bright and the air was cold, altogether an ideal night to be out driving and especially to have for one's companion Helen Stone, thought Nims — and rightly.

Soon they left the village far behind and were alone with Nature in her wildest mood. The silence was broken only by the chirp of the crickets, the deep harsh croaking of the frogs in a nearby swamp, and of the hoot of an owl. The sounds mingled with that of the sharp click of the horse's hoofs. It was a rather lonesome place, either side of the path being lined with forest trees, lowering and threatening. The darkness of the forest seemed to throw into contrast the road, ghostly white in the moonlight.

Suddenly, as they approached the bridge over the little river, between Medway and Granby, the horse snorted and shied at some object. As he started to run, Nims' attention was attracted to the occasion of his fright, a dwarf man, apparently, seated on the railing of the wooden bridge. Startled by the action of the horse the creature jumped to the top rail and ran along it like a tight-rope walker for some distance, and then sprang down and disappeared somewhere beneath the structure.

Such an apparition would bring a creepy feeling over any one, but Nims, although surprised, did not show it. He knew that his companion had noticed the strange figure. He felt her trembling hand resting at his elbow, and it brought a thrill to him to think that for once she had seemed dependent upon him and in need of his protection.

That night Helen Stone stood dreamily looking at herself in the glass. It was long after midnight, almost two hours having elapsed since Nims had bidden her good-bye at the door. In her hand she held a photo. It was that of Nims, taken when he had graduated from High School. One that he had exchanged with her for her own.

"Oh, Harlan!" she said, "do you not know I love you better than any other man in the world?"

Again she looked at the picture, at the firm, clear-cut, manly face upturned to her.

"Don't you love me, too, dear?" she asked softly. "Is it only a little money that stands between you and me? Oh, I wish I was poor," she said, with feeling. "I know you would come and put those strong manly arms around me and call me your own little girl, as you often did years ago when I was a wee tot and had fallen and hurt myself."

Then she raised the photo to her lips and kissed it, saying "Good-night, dear," placed it again on the mantel and sought her bed, and the wind whistling around the house seemed to echo the words, "Good-night, dear."

CHAPTER IX.

In the Laboratory.

The laboratory was a marvel. Here Nims spent most of his spare time. It was a large room, one side being covered with shelves on which were test tubes, retorts, and all the paraphernalia necessary to supply the needs of a chemist. On the other side of the room was his library, containing several thousand volumes, many of them works on criminology, cabinets and card indexes where his descriptions of criminals and celebrated crimes were filed away, and another part was devoted to Natural History, containing an elaborate and extensive collection of beetles, butterflies, etc. A long table at one end was used as a sort of a work-table, while a small stand in the center and several chairs, with a very comfortable looking morris chair, completed the furniture in the room.

Friday night found Nims in his laboratory. He was not alone, but had as his guest of honor, his old schoolmate, Helen Stone.

They were neighbors. The Nims estate joined that of President Stone.

Passers-by called attention to the striking contrast between the two residences. One was a very large mansion, surrounded by beautiful grounds laid out with an eye of refinement. The other, a small, unpretentious house, painted white, with green blinds and only about five or six acres in the entire lot. However, President Stone was not ashamed of his neighbor, for everything on that plot of ground was in good condition, with walks nicely gravelled and edges cut. There were no torn-down fences or tumbled-down stone walls. Nims spent considerable of his time in keeping everything in good repair, and this met with the hearty approval of the president.

Since Nims had taken up his first real attempt at detective work, Helen had slipped over a good many evenings to call on Nims and his mother and to note his progress. To-night she had called particularly to get his answers to the questions he had propounded to the detectives at her father's house.

"I am very anxious," she said, "to have you explain some of the deductions to me that you promulgated at the meeting last night. You know, Harlan," she added, "I have more confidence in your capability than I have in those professional detectives."

Nims laughed softly and said, "Well, you see I don't belong to the regulars. I am only an amateur. Still I believe that I may show them a few things yet."

"I am so curious, Harlan. Would you care to trust me with some of them, or are they such profound secrets that you cannot share them?" she answered, with a pretty beseeching air.

"A request from the Queen of the Occasion is a command here," said Nims, with a playful mock reverence. "As my guest you are the One-to-be-Obeyed. Pray use my knowledge to the limit of your interest."

"Please take the stand — or rather the morris chair, then," rejoined Helen laughingly, and I will soon find out all I want to know."

Nims, who had been experimenting with some test tubes while he talked, dropped everything with a laugh, and humbly obeyed.

"Your Honor," said Helen, mischievously, bowing low to the big stuffed owl right above her queenly head, intending by the gesture to convey the idea that he was judge. (Wise girl! She knew he could not take the examination out of her hands or rule against her.) "Your Honor, I will now proceed to cross-examine the accused in his own behalf."

Then turning to the prisoner, who seemed a rather willing one, she proceeded:

"What is your name?"

"Harlan Nims."

"Where do you reside?"

"Granby."

"Your occupation?"

"A detective."

"How long have you followed this profession?"

"About six days."

"Did you not infer at a recent meeting held at President Stone's house by a question put to one of the Boston detectives that you had established

the identity between Saturday's sneak thief and that of one of Sunday's bank robbers?"

"I did."

"You will state to the Honorable Court and Jury all you know of this case," finished Helen, dropping into a chair and leaning back ready for the recital.

"In the first place, regarding my discovery that Saturday's robber was also present Sunday, the deduction was most plain. While in the wash-room Saturday night, my foot struck something that went spinning across the floor with a sharp metallic ring. I picked it up and found it to be a small hypodermic syringe such as physicians use. On Monday I picked up a portion of the label from a bottle of morphine and also discovered spots on the floor which were doubtless of that drug. The janitor's duty was to clear up the office, brush and sweep it at night, and there was every evidence that he had done so, therefore we may safely deduce that the man who dropped the vial in the bank *Sunday* was the one who visited it *Saturday* morning.

"In the second place, the discovery proves that the fellow was an opium fiend of the worst kind, who could go absolutely nowhere without carrying the deadly drug with him.

"Thirdly, I have obtained also the height of one of the robbers. The janitor had been kalsomining the room and finished up that corner of it Saturday afternoon. One of the robbers stood near enough to the freshly whitened wall to allow the rim of his hat to brush lightly against it and leave a mark. You may think this could have been done previously. I doubt it — for this reason. It was a dirty black streak, and could only have been made by a derby hat which had been badly soaked with water. The first rain we have had for two weeks came Saturday night about 12 o'clock.

"Fourthly at least two men were involved. I noted two distinct foot-prints," and Nims held up two plaster casts. "One is doubtless that of the Brain of the Enterprise — a gentleman professional, size seven, slightly pointed toe, up-to-date shape, etc. The other is a broad, flat shoe — the footwear of a laboring man or one spending much time on his feet. This was the assistant.

"Fifthly, neither of these gained entrance to the bank by means of the back window. I believe this, because upon examination I found no print of a ladder in the soft ground. The ones the learned Boston detectives discovered were made by a country policeman and a humble bank clerk attempting to enter in broad daylight a bank whose front doors were closed. And this was the only means to use."

"Who, then, entered that window?" questioned Helen, "surely that was the means by which they got into the bank."

"Your Honor," replied Nims, addressing the stuffed owl, "I refuse to answer this on advice of counsel."

"Anything more you care to state to the Court?" asked the fair cross-examiner.

"I have a little exhibit here," replied Nims, "which I shall speak of at more length when next the court meets, but at present I have not sufficient data to warrant my bringing it into evidence."

He held up what appeared to be a tiny wooden receptacle, a sort of miniature cigar box with a large opening at one end.

"Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury, this I found just outside of the Granby jail. I fear I have abused your patience by abstruse deductions, but in closing let me say the solution of the whole matter is hidden herein, and this case hereafter will be known as **'The Mystery of the Sandal=wood Box.'** "

Suddenly, in the midst of his peroration he heard an exclamation from Helen. Glancing in her direction, he found her eyes not on him, but staring wildly at the window. He followed their direction.

A startled look came over his own face. *Somebody was staring in the window. Somebody who wore a mask and was doubtless trying to spy on young Nims' doings. The head was visible only an instant and then disappeared.*

Nims started quickly for the door, snatching something from a shelf as he did so. Helen could see it gleam through his fingers. The next moment he was out of doors. No one was in sight. There were foot-prints, tangible incriminating evidence, in the flower bed, under the window. Nims got down and examined them. *They were of the same size as the*

"IN HER HAND SHE HELD A PHOTO, IT WAS THAT OF NIMS, TAKEN WHEN HE HAD GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL."

footprints of the party who had been in the bank and of the ones he had found under the bank rear window.

Returning, he found Helen very nervous, but very brave. Stepping to the telephone he called up his friend Belmont and said, "Come up to the house at once. There's trouble brewing here. Some one has been spying on me to-night. Miss Stone is here and it is essential that I escort her home, and I want to have some one on duty here."

Then turning, he said to Helen, "Wait just a minute," and gathering all the evidence that he had collected he carried the armful out of the room to another part of the house, where he placed it in a little old-fashioned cupboard and locked it. Returning to Helen, he said, "Now I am ready to escort you home."

They had just reached the steps of the Stone mansion when Helen exclaimed, "Look through the trees! There's a fire!"

"Looks pretty near, too," cried Nims, "guess I'll hurry back," and he did, to find his own laboratory ablaze!

At the door he met Belmont, and together they burst in and fought the flames, which were extinguished before any great damage had been done. After it was all out, Belmont turned to his friend and said, "I guess you were right. Some one is trying to destroy your plant. We arrived just in time."

Later investigation showed that the place had been ransacked before the fire, the whole proceeding showing that some one had been frustrated in an attempt to destroy incriminating evidence. This they would have undoubtedly done had not Nims placed it in a place of safety, where it was found a moment later intact.

CHAPTER X.

The President Receives a Caller.

President Stone was by training a religious man. His mother had been an orthodox of orthodoxes.

He had been brought up to honor and respect the Sabbath as a day set apart for meditation and church attendance.

He viewed with bitter antipathy any infringement upon the strict observance of the day.

The attempts of many who had not been reared in the same atmosphere as he had to give a more liberal interpretation to the old Mosaic Law brought down upon their heads his anathemas.

The turning of a Holy Day into a Holiday seemed to him of the Devil.

But when a man is to be conquered do we assail his strongest convictions first? No more than when a fortress is to be assaulted are our guns trained where the walls are thickest. We train our batteries at the weak points.

The body of Achilles was invulnerable to the arrows of Paris till he drew at a venture and landed a shot in the heel — then Achilles fell. The president's failing point was his avarice. His God, though he was unconscious of it, was Gold, and he was its most devoted worshipper.

His life had been one of long and hard struggle and that struggle had hardened his heart and brought the firm lines about his mouth. Friendly competition is the best thing in the world for the making of a man, on the contrary the hurtful kind is the most discouraging and damning.

He had laughed at the word "Trust" which the so-called "Yellow Journals" had made such a hue and cry over, but as the time went on he was half inclined to believe they were not so far from the right after all. He wondered after all what the world was coming to. Was it not after all a case of the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer? He noted the big consolidations in every line of business. He noted the power of these combinations. Even the big fellows formed combines, one with the

other, lest one of them might destroy his fellow. And the man who fought such demands and refused to capitulate, desiring to run his own business independently, was "pushed to the wall."

The capitalists made their millions, not on the luxuries of life, but on the necessities — because there was more in it.

The woman starving for bread with hungry babes at home who dared in her desperation to appropriate a loaf from some counter was promptly jailed, but the manipulator cornering the wheat market, thereby cutting every family's loaf in half in the United States, was hailed as a "financial marvel."

When, during the winter, coal went up, up, up, and the poor ones of earth, unable to buy such a luxury, huddled in rooms and in desperation turned to oil as a protection from the wintery blast, he saw a merciless syndicate raise the price of that commodity in order to pay a magnificent dividend to their stockholders. He saw the craze of combine, too, even in his own realm of endeavor — the Banking Business.

He noted the consolidation of banking institutions in the neighboring city. A dozen banks merged into one and grey-haired presidents, cashiers, bookkeepers, tellers and clerks were "out of work" after years of faithful and responsible labor.

He groaned in spirit and from the bottom of his heart like the prophet of old, he cried:

"How long, Oh Lord? How long?"

Is it any wonder then that he gripped tighter than ever the strings to his purse?

Money, he realized, was his only friend. When that was gone — was not Hope gone, too? Oh, you who are so quick to censure, stop a moment to pity, even while you disapprove. His home, the position of his idolized child in society, his own influence and impress on the world was determined by his bank account. With it he was the sought-for, the envied of his fellow-men; without it, he knew very well the change that must occur.

On the Sunday afternoon following the robbery at the bank, Sunnyside received a caller who would assuredly not have been found there had it

not been the home of the rich and influential bank president. It was Congressman Hart.

Helen, reading a book in a hammock swung between two pines in a little group of trees overlooking the lawn, made a pleasing picture in her dainty pink muslin dress, a large garden hat shading her sweet and winsome face. Its subtle effect was not lost on the Congressman, although his "Red Devil" entered with such a rush and roar that it startled her to her feet in alarm. She was the prettiest, and to use the expression of Amy Darling, her intimate friend and chum, "the sweetest girl in Granby." Her figure was superb, tall and graceful, with perfect poise and balance, and if her figure was perfect, her face and features were adorable. "A favored child of the gods," thought the politician, as he reflected that she was also an heiress and only child.

"Lucky dog that gets her," he muttered under his breath, as he raised his hat in passing.

A moment later he stopped the "Red Devil" at the wide steps which led up to the broad veranda, leaped out and ascended to where, quietly smoking his after-dinner cigar, sat the bank president.

"You will pardon my intrusion," he said, courteously, "but I came on important business."

"Is it so important that it cannot be transacted on any other day than the Sabbath?" remarked the bank official, somewhat pointedly.

Hart's face flushed. "In this case, yes," he replied, "I am simply doing you a personal favor in coming. It must be acted on immediately, as it concerns Mabel Consolidated Copper."

The other started. He motioned the Congressman to follow him and led the way into the library. Seating himself in a large easy chair near the center-table, he pointed out one near him for his companion. Then, picking up from the table an open box of choice cigars, he passed it to his visitor, saying as he did so, "Well, what is it?"

CHAPTER XI.

The Liberality of Congressman Hart.

Hart pulled out a bit of yellow paper crumbled,— the usual telegraphic form — and passed it to the President. It was addressed to him and read as follows:

"Close up all your friends at once. Remember, personal friends only. Struck big vein of copper. Price of stock will soar immediately."

The President fingered the telegram nervously. "Was it possible," he thought, "that after years of waiting he was about to realize his ambitions? Oh! how hard he had struggled and worked to gain the little he had and now in a night perhaps he would recoup all his losses and on the morrow awake a rich man."

A feeling of exultation passed through his frail body. It brought color to his cheek and at that moment had his friends seen him would have appeared twenty years younger, but for the fact that the silvery locks that crowned his well-shaped head belied the youthful countenance and seemed to refute such a thought by this almost clear and audible reply:

"'Tis fever only, the fever of old age. It's the worst manhood-wrecking, soul-destroying momentary flash of heat since the world began — the Gold Fever."

Like all intermittent fevers it was gone, leaving him weak and shaking like an aspen leaf. He raised his hand and pressed his fingers to his closed eyes. Then bringing into play his marvellous and indomitable will he brought to a standstill his runaway fancies.

The next moment he was himself, the cautious, collected president of the First National Bank of Granby.

"This is all very well, Mr. Hart," he said, coolly, "for you to show me such evidence, but are you not aware that this method of telegraphing great strikes of ore is the usual method employed by the scheming promoter of the day?"

"If Mr. Stone, who has called me his friend in the past and has apparently believed in my integrity, doubts my sincerity *now*, it might be well for us to drop further conversation," replied Hart, somewhat injuredly. "I said before I am by nature a religious man," with added solemnity, "but for the sake of one whom I believed held me in highest confidence I broke my general rule of conduct on the Sabbath in order to whisper in his ear what I believed would be to his advantage."

"You will pardon me," said President Stone in his dignified way, "my remark carried no inference; but you will admit that —"

"That such announcements are not uncommon among brokers," finished the Congressman. "I do, but," he added, "perhaps one clause of this telegram may seem significant," and he read it.

"Remember, *personal friends only.*"

"Surely this does not command me to close up all? Surely this does not mean the hoi polloi?"

"Let me say right here, Mr. Stone, though I have but few personal friends I can claim hundreds of political ones. Yes, lots of them, looking for favors, positions, influence, personal aggrandizement. But my personal friends can be counted on the fingers of one hand. I'll not weary you though", he added, with what seemed an aggrieved sigh, "you know I am a pretty busy man."

"Forgive me, Hart," exclaimed President Stone, extending his hand, "I have every confidence in you, and you know it. I doubted a moment ago whether you had really reflected on the merits of the case or not. I am now ready to talk business."

"And I can afford to be generous, too," exclaimed Hart, "I am apt to think bank men cold and prejudiced — not broad and able to grasp big things. Let's sit down and talk things over," and drawing their chairs up to the table they soon covered sheets of paper with figures.

Two hours later Hart jumped into his automobile and whisked away. In his pocket was a goodly check, attached to which was the signature of Charles Stone.

The signer of the check watched from his piazza the big "Red Devil" disappear, then turning about started to enter the house, saying as he did so, "I've staked nearly everything. It's win or lose. It's abundant wealth or most abject poverty."

CHAPTER XII.

An Interview With Boston Bank Officials.

After careful thought Nims had come to the conclusion that the robbers had planned their campaign ahead, figuring to rob the bank the very time the package of bills reached their destination. He thought it reasonable then to conclude that they must have been informed by some one who knew of this shipment.

A few days later Mr. Nims walked briskly into the banking rooms of the Second Consolidated Bank, produced his Special Badge, and asked to see the president of the institution, that was so-called because it was a consolidation of a number of Boston banks.

Nims had a friend in the bank who was assistant paying teller and had planned to meet him and gain an introduction to the president, but on his arrival was informed that his friend was "out." Hence, he introduced himself.

He learned later that the term "out" in this institution meant more than simply "out to lunch" or "out on account of sickness." It meant "thrown out."

The president was a stocky man about five feet and six inches in height, bulging forehead, dark eyes, hook nose and strong chin. A heavy black mustache covered a firm mouth and a pair of thin lips.

"A brilliant business man, exceedingly ambitious, but absolutely heartless," was Nims' mental observation.

He was coolly smoking a cigar, although it was only about eleven o'clock, and Nims noted a sign inside the railing of the bank proper which read "No Smoking allowed in the bank during business hours."

"Doubtless considers himself above the petty rules which apply to employees," observed Nims to himself.

Then he approached and explained his mission.

The Great Man simply jerked a thumb in the direction of some desks outside of his private office, saying,

"Mr. Nims, it will be impossible for me to give you any of my time. I should suggest you see our cashier." The cashier was of an entirely different type. He had the appearance of a school boy, though he had grown a beard to try to conceal his youth. Nims learned that after graduating from college this young fellow had spent several months in each department, and then had been announced as cashier over the heads of men who had been in the service longer and were more capable of attending to bank affairs.

"Dad had money," was the reason given. He had a small King Charles spaniel tied to a leg of his chair that yelped and whined. As he planned to leave early that day, of course he considered it a very trivial matter to have a dog in the bank. Golf sticks in one corner of his little partition pen showed where most of his time was spent. He greeted Mr. Nims very courteously though, and after he had heard his story, said, "Mr. Nims, I would suggest you see our paying teller, but before you do so, it will be necessary for me to be sure that you come with some authority," which was proper.

"Whatever they may say of him he's certainly courteous," decided Nims.

Nims showed his badge, but this hardly suited the cashier. When he was informed that Nims had been bookkeeper of their correspondent bank, he appeared to be more interested and said that he would introduce him to the paying teller. That worthy received him very pleasantly, and he impressed him even more favorably than had the other two. He gave him all the information he could, telling him that if the package of $30,000 worth of bills had been taken on Friday night, it was taken by some one who had been informed, but said that he did not know of any outside parties who could hear of it.

After asking several shrewd questions which were answered by the paying teller, Harlan left, unable to obtain a clue. When he again asked for Frank Foster who had been employed in the bank, he found that he had left the Tuesday before.

"Guess I'll have to see him," decided Nims, as he passed out of the doors of the institution.

CHAPTER XIII.

Slocum Booms Mabel Consolidated.

As Nims sauntered out of the bank he noticed two men talking earnestly on the Water Street side of the Post Office. As he approached he could not help but notice that their conversation became less animated. He recognized in one his rival for the hand of Helen, Congressman Hart, who greeted him pleasantly, remarked on the weather, and asked in his easy indifferent way:

"On business in Boston?" The question appeared a most natural one, but his apparent interest in hearing Nims' reply augmented by the eager look of his companion made him cautious.

"Oh!" he answered, in his offhand style, "fixing up bank statements with our correspondent bank here, the Second Consolidated. Expect to be home soon."

Hart's face did not change, but the relieved expression of his companion was more than apparent.

"I wonder what's up?" Nims said, as he walked away—down Water Street. "Hart seemed quite anxious to quiz, and who the dickens is his companion?" Just then the newsboy held out a paper for him to buy. Nims good naturedly reached for a copper and bought it.

There on the front page was a likeness of the very man whom he had seen talking with Hart, and the *Record* informed him it was President Slocum of the Mabel Consolidated Copper Company. Then he looked for the headlines. They read as follows:

"Chas. Slocum,
President Mabel Consolidated,
Reports a Remarkable Strike.
Rich Vein of Copper Opened up.
This no Doubt Will Boom
The Price of Stock."

"Funny the president was so nervous. Guess he knows I do some buying and selling for President Stone all right."

Then he suddenly stopped. "I'll shadow those fellows."

The Post Office Building is in a square of the city bounded by Devonshire, Water, Congress and Milk Streets. A corridor inside follows the bounding streets. Nims turned into the Post Office and following the corridor soon came to a window where he could watch them unseen. They both were considerably disturbed and excited. "Some deal's up," muttered Nims, and then as they moved away, "now to work my follow-up system."

They crossed Washington Street and descended into "The Rathskeller," Nims following.

Part of the tables there are partitioned off, which makes it very pleasant and desirable for those wishing to converse with some privacy.

By the profuse bows of the colored waiter, Nims soon located his party. The partition next was empty and Nims dropped into it and ordered a light lunch. His contemporaries had planned a profuse and elaborate banquet. He noted they had ordered liquors and he believed that this might soon unloose their tongues. "Perhaps," thought he, "I may learn a few important facts. There's something rotten in Denmark."

He carefully listened and was at last rewarded. For a time their voices were low and inaudible, but gradually as the liquor warmed them up and raised their spirits he caught words like this;

"Yes–boom–it–up–when–Public–gets–Crazy–unload. We can keep price up all right — Harris can't scare us–Buy–in first shares — Nims–what–doing–in–Boston ? Don't–let–Stone–get–wise–Stone–sells–out–game–lost.

Nims got up quietly, leaving his half-finished lunch, slipped a half-dollar to the very large-voiced negro who had waited on him and was, Nims thought, about to ask him what was the trouble with the order. Such action from his big-voiced server would have attracted attention and precipitated matters.

"I will go to President Stone's broker," said he, "and spend another day here if it is necessary."

As he struck Washington Street again he noticed a large crowd around

the bulletin boards. Wondering what the excitement was he drew nearer and there in big black letters read as follows:

TOM HARRIS
THE NOTED OUTSIDE OPERATOR
ATTACKS
MABEL CONSOLIDATED COPPER
PROMISES
STARTLING DISCLOSURES
TOMORROW.

and on the financial page of the Boston paper he had secured appeared this significant advertisement:

Mabel Consolidated Investors.

Stop—Look—Listen.

Read my half-page advertisement in tomorrow's papers. It is a warning.

"A prudent man foreseeth evil, but the simple pass on to destruction."

Thomas B. Harris.

After supper Nims decided to call upon Frank Foster, whom he had been surprised to learn had been thrown out of the Second Consolidated Bank.

On his arrival at the little unpretentious house in Roxbury, where he lived, Nims was met at the door by Foster and cordially greeted. Nims stated his errand, and also expressed a desire to learn why his old friend lost his position and what the trouble was.

CHAPTER XIV.

Foster on Present Bank Methods.

"Banking business isn't what it used to be," declared Foster in disgust. "A few years ago every one had a show. It was merit that counted, not money.

"If one of the bank directors wished his son to learn bank methods he'd have to wait his chance for an opening, and he would have the same duties as any other young man when the opportunity presented itself.

"Why in our old bank, God bless it," he exclaimed, fervently, "we were expected with brotherly grace to help one another and as one after another dropped out, we moved up till we got to the top.

"Both the cashier and president began as messenger boys, and by hard faithful work at last reached the top. Now money talks and it's got a big mouth, a long tongue, a strong will.

"It's not the man with the best record that counts, but the man with the biggest bank book. It's not the man that is the most honest, but the man that is the slickest.

"Boston boasts of her blue blood, her aristocracy, her stalwart ancestry, and a few years ago any man was honored, even tho' poor, who could claim honorable descent, and for himself an honorable reputation.

"But bless you! the little mean, contemptible, shallow-pated nincompoop can get into the best society, and get the best position in banking circles if he can pay the admission. A little man with a bank roll can do more than the big man with the little one.

"This is true in New York as well, perhaps more so. A prominent broker there informed me that he could get his check certified for almost any amount on his own recognizance without hardly a dollar to his credit in the Bank. They took all risk on the man's 'say so' that he would cover his loan by three o'clock. How's that for modern banking methods?

"Now, for instance, take our bank, the Second Consolidated Bank. It is a great financial leviathan that swallows up a dozen banks at a mouthful and thirsts for more.

"The president is like La Fontaine's Frog, who wanted to become as large as the ox. He is blown out like a football with his ambitious pipe dreams.

"There is another Consolidatd Bank and his ambition is to far surpass it. He draws a salary four times what the ordinary bank president should, and he keeps the directors from making any comment by cutting down the salary of his clerks.

"He is a smart man, I'll admit, but he is all ambition, he has no heart.

"Why we are turning off the men clerks, and putting girls in their places. They are satisfied with a small salary. They have no families to look after, nor do they contemplate as man does, marriage and a home of their own in the future.

"We are hemmed in by childish rules and regulations. No one can go into another department to speak to another without permission from the head of his department. I heard one of the boys talking to his neighbor the other day, and his satire was something immense.

"'There's the fire alarm,' exclaimed his friend, 'do you suppose the fire engine comes up this street?'

"'Not on your life,' exclaimed the other. 'They don't go by the *jail*.'

"Just think of the men who have been thrown out by this Consolidation. There are scores of them, good capable fellows. Some spent the best part of their life in the business, too. The ones that had a pull stayed in, the others were informed that after such and such a date they were not needed.

"That's the way I got in when we took in the Importers and Traders' Bank. I saw my finish, and was given a month's notice. Reason—their assistant paying teller was capable, and came cheaper. So here I am.

"Now let me see as regards the $30,000 in bills shipped the first to Granby. I don't remember any suspicious character around that day."

"Any comments made?" suggested Nims.

"Gad!" exclaimed Foster, "there was old man Levy, the note shaver, you know him. Regular skinflint. He had just cashed a check and was counting out the bills when Moses, the paying teller, turned around angrily to one of the messengers, that had just come in and said,

"'Have you sent that $30,000 worth of bills to Granby?'

"'No,' he replied.

"'Well, get busy,' he said 'it has got to go to-night.'

"Old man Levy looks up in surprise and asked the paying teller if that was not a lot of money to send by express."

"Do you think he would follow up such an opportunity?" queried Nims.

"No, I do not," was the positive response, "he's too much of a sneak, and would live in constant fear lest he might be implicated."

Then he suddenly rose to his feet, his eyes brilliant with some overpowering thought, his lips trembling with excitement, "He would not, I say, but," he waved his hand, dramatically, "*he is unscrupulous and low-lived enough to whisper his observation to some other more daring and fearless if it meant a penny in it for him.*"

CHAPTER XV.

A Tom Harris Advertisement.

As he neared the bulletin board the next morning Nims noted there an eager and excited throng. They blocked both the sidewalk and street. The majority of them were well dressed and had the appearance of business men. Some Nims recognized as local brokers.

Surely the bulletin painter for the time appeared to be the most popular in the Hub. With quick lightning strokes he was headlining in blazing red letters on the white paper news of importance. Nims drew near. The painter just then finished his second line and bent down to wet his brush. It read:

"Tom Harris
Begins"

Then he resumed his work. A moment and again he stopped for more vermillion. This time it read:

"Tom Harris
Begins
His Attack on"

Then he paused, his brush poised in the air, critically surveying his work. It was more than weak human nature could stand.

"Go on!" thundered the mob, unmindful of the remonstrances of passersby, the threats of policemen, the curses of draymen.

"Give him the hook if he don't!" yelled another.

Everybody laughed, but the burst of merriment did not lessen the eagerness of the crowd. They pushed and pulled, elbowed and jostled one another in their excitement. Out of the windows too, on the opposite side of the street, peered eager faces.

Comments, if any were made, were lost in the murmur of the crowd which sounded like ten thousand hives of bees swarming.

The bulletin man bent to his task, and with quick strokes finished the headline and stepped down and out. There it stood in its entirety — the headline that had caused so much heat:

"Tom Harris
Begins
His Attack on
Mabel Consolidated."

The crowd dispersed in a dozen directions — excitement in every face, and comment on every tongue.

It sounded as it must have sounded in the days of the Tower of Babel, when every man talked in a different tongue and wondered why his neighbor knew not the words he spoke.

Nims was particularly attracted by the conversation of a splendid-looking elderly gentleman near him, whom he recognized as president of the old Fifth National Bank and whose words were listened to with considerable respect and not without some approbation.

"I am a bank man," said he simply, "and as such it behooves me to approach all matters of importance in the Realm of Finance with that amount of caution, coolness and candidness as befits my position of trust and responsibility.

"But let me tell you, gentlemen," he added deliberately, and raising his hand significantly, "altho' you may not agree with me, and I grant every man the right of personal opinion, I believe that Tom Harris is sincere in his statements, and I believe that his bearish actions on certain recent securities is but to change inflated values to real ones and a means to an end to squeeze unnecessary moisture out of stocks that are badly watered"— this last with a twinkle in his keen eye. Then he added seriously, "If he continues as he has with the same sincerity and apparently honest purpose he will be hailed as the Financial Savior of his Country.

"That's all," he added with a smile, noting their astonishment, "just remember what I have said, and *wait*."

A few moments later the newsboys were shouting, "Extree 'dition — all about Tom Harris and Mabel."

How the crowds swarmed about them — hands extended for a copy.

Nims heard an old lady as she passed by exclaim to her companion, "Pity sakes alive! how crazy Boston people be over scandals. Seems to me every one of 'em's on the down grade. I wonder who Mabel is?" but he did not catch the other's reply.

He soon got a copy, and as he opened it his eyes fell on a large advertisement which occupied one quarter of a page. It read as follows:

"MABEL CONSOLIDATED— INVESTORS

WARNING.

I have been watching for a number of months the efforts of certain unscrupulous parties to boom Mabel Consolidated Copper. I have at hand valuable and authentic information which causes me to sound a note of warning to holders of such stock. It is this: 'Stand from under the structure before it falls.'

There is a crash coming—and soon. Don't be in the ruins! The Perpetrators of this Gigantic Swindle won't be there. Why should you?

Better beat it while your boots are good. Inflated values collapse when punctured by the Pin Point of Investigation. Listen to the facts in the case.

Report I.—The reported 'big strike' in the Mabel was simply a few feet of fair ore.

Report 2.—They have cut through into the Gorilla mines, which is a good proposition, and are hoisting its ore out thro' the Mabel in order to boost the price of the stock and bulge their own pockets.

I will have more to say—later. I have given warning and stand ready to produce the proofs.

Remember the old saw. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright and —Get Busy.

T. B. HARRIS."

CHAPTER XVI.

A Visit to a Notorious Note Broker.

As Nims hastened away from the bulletin board he said to himself, "As the stock market does not open up till 10 o'clock guess I'll drop down and make a visit on Mr. Levy of A. Levy & Low, for Foster told me that he was the one who seemed quite surprised regarding that big shipment of bills to the First National Bank of Granby. Perhaps my meeting with him may throw some light on this mystery. I have all day to spend here in Boston, and so I might as well make good use of it."

Nims looked up the name of this party in the directory and found that he had a little office at 23 Doane Street. After climbing two rickety flights of stairs to the third story, he saw facing him these letters painted on ground-glass door:

"A. Levy & Low,
Note Brokers."

Opening the door he stepped in. It was a dingy little office that he entered and consisted of two rooms. On the door that entered into the further room was the word "Private."

Sitting at a desk, the back of which faced Nims, was some one. Then his quick eye made a discovery. Facing him, though partly concealed, and at the back of the man sitting at the desk was a mirror, and as Nims looked towards the desk he could barely see reflected in the glass the face of one whom he judged to be the proprietor.

It was placed in such a way that the proprietor could see who came in without being seen by the one who entered. The arrangement was not unlike that of the glass in front of an organist in a church whose organ is in the rear who, by looking into it, can receive the signal from the precentor at the other end of the auditorium.

Nims, by long training, had accustomed himself to take in a whole room at one glance and inadvertently he had discovered the scheme of the proprietor. The next moment Mr. Levy, for it was he, came forward, and asked what he could do for him.

"I saw that sign on the door, and wondered if I could get a note discounted here."

"Vell," exclaimed the Hebrew, rubbing his hands briskly. "Vill you be so kind as to tell me more about de note dat you vould like to haf me deescount. Let me zee it," he added eagerly.

Nims replied that he hadn't the note with him, but that if Mr. Levy would be in about two o'clock he would bring it, although he would first like to know what rate he charged.

"Vat rate?" exclaimed the proprietor. "Vat rate? It all depends, on vat the note ees. On some I get vive per cent and on odders I get more."

Just then a boy rushed into the office and up to Mr. Levy, handing him an envelope. Mr. Levy went to his desk, sat down, picked up the spectacles he had taken off and began to read it.

"Gott im Himmel!" he exclaimed, snatching off his spectacles, and tossing the letter on his desk as he rushed into the next room, the door of which was marked "Private." He left it wide open, however, so that any movement on the part of Nims would have betrayed him.

Nims kept his selfsame position near the desk, the back of which was turned his way. Suddenly he thought of the mirror and looking into it, easily deciphered the letter, which fortunately was not typewritten, but in large masculine hand, as of one in haste. The writing was, of course, backhanded, the glass reflecting the reverse of the original, but one of Nim's pet diversions in early days had been to learn to read reverse script, and he easily mastered the message, which read as follows:

"Tom Harris attacks Mabel. Rush that loan down as soon as possible."

Mr. Levy returned with a telegraph blank, sat down, wrote an answer, and passed it to the messenger, saying as he did so, "Send this at vunce!" and the boy disappeared down the stairs. He then turned to Nims, who said, "I see you are busy and I will come in at two o'clock."

"Very vell," he replied, resumed his pen, and Nims started down the stairs.

When he struck the second landing he increased his speed and soon overtook the boy, but keeping a short distance from him, He noted the

office that the youngster ran into, but waited until he saw a portly gentleman entering, when he followed unobserved.

The boy had taken his place at the end of the line, and Nims went up to one of the tables, pretended to write a telegram, and in a few moments' time took his place directly behind the messenger, who held his message carelessly in his hand, open. For once, "for the good of the public," said Nims to himself, he laid aside good manners, looked over the lad's shoulder and read the message. It ran as follows:

> **"Where is money you promised me? Must have it at once.**
>
> **L."**

The address was the one he expected to see.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Spite of The "Red Devil."

The Hon. William Hart, received a telegram early the same morning in cipher which, when translated, read as follows:

> **"Harris' ad appears in noon's paper. Boston edition will doubtless reach Granby this afternoon. Get Stone out of town.**
>
> **Slocum."**

Hart called upon President Stone at 12 o'clock at the bank and informed him he was very anxious to take him to Medway that he might appraise a piece of property for him.

Hart added that the property would soon be put under the auctioneer's hammer, and he wished to bid on it.

"But I have not been to lunch yet," demurred the president.

"Neither have I," returned Hart, "but you shall lunch with me at Medway."

"How long will it take?" demanded the bank man.

"A very short time. I have my automobile outside and it doesn't take long to cover the ground." Then he added, "The ride will do you good. You bank people keep too much confined indoors," and who could resist such a good-natured insistence?

They soon reached the town, and Hart having previously telephoned the best hotel there, the two men sat down to an elaborate lunch, then left to examine the property in question. This took some time, as President Stone in all his labors was very conscientious and painstaking.

Suddenly he looked at his watch and exclaimed, "I had no idea it was so late; Mr. Hart. I must return at once to Granby. I have important business this afternoon and evening."

"Do not trouble yourself at all regarding *time*," replied the other, in his easy-going way, "so long as we have this 'Red Devil' to return in. This is the fastest motor car in the country. I had it made purposely for me in France, and it has never taken anybody's dust. We can return by the Fells and make it inside of twenty minutes."

A few minutes later, after carefully examining the machinery and spending some time looking over one of the back tires, he helped the president in and jumped in himself. The next moment they were off with the speed of the wind.

"I guess we will go round the long way," muttered Hart, aloud, but as though talking to himself.

President Stone interrupted him, "Do you think it possible that we will get there in good time?"

"Not the least. In fact I prefer the roundabout way because we will not be bothered by policemen who might hold us up for speeding."

He headed his car in the direction of Melrose. Faster and faster they flew. When he had reached the extreme end of the Fells near the South Dam, which was about five miles from their destination, he turned his car about and headed it in the direction of Granby. They had been going along nicely, when suddenly he stopped the machine and leaped out, saying as he did so:

"You will excuse me a moment, I am going ahead a bit to look for a sign-board. There are two roads that branch here, and I am not fully acquainted with them," and he disappeared up the road, rounded the curve, and was soon out of sight.

It seemed strange to the president that Hart one moment should speak of his familiarity with the road, and later seem to be in doubt regarding his whereabouts.

As he left Stone noticed that one of his partner's pockets bulged as though it contained some sort of a package, and when he returned it was flat.

Apologizing to his companion for the delay, Hart again jumped into the car and started off at full speed. They had rounded the curve and were just rolling up one of the branch roads, when the president heard a hiss like escaping steam.

"Punctured," exclaimed Hart, in apparent surprise, as with a gesture of vexation he leaped from the car. One of the back tires was flat. "We are in for it now," he added, in a tone of disgust.

An hour later the Congressman's "Red Devil" limped into Granby and

the occupants heard the newsboys with their six o'clock editions excitedly crying out:

"Extree 'dition of *Times*. All 'bout Harris attacking Mabel Consolidated."

There was a very firm, decided look on President Stone's face as he courteously bade Hart good night. The prize-ring follower would have called it "Stone's fighting face." It was that of a man who had laid a plan of action and was eager to go about it.

"Give me long distance," his daughter heard him say to the local operator. She was entering to announce that dinner was ready. Then later, "Yes, I want Boston, 435 — " and she saw him start as he said, "What is that you say?" His voice was quick and sharp.

This was the reply:

"Can't get Boston. Trouble with wires. Repairers are seeking break."

He dropped back in the chair, his face white, his lips trembling, the veins standing out like whipcords on his forehead.

He had tried to get his broker and failed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Battle of Giants.

Ten o'clock found Nims in the office of Stone's broker, watching the tape rolling off itself in huge billows. Frenzy was in the air and Mabel Consolidated was high pressure point. The announcement of President Slocum the morning before, followed by the small but significant advertisement of Tom Harris, had stirred up all investors. Following this came the huge Harris ad. of the morning, which had been read by all the business men en route to Boston.

On steam cars, on trolley lines, ferries and elevated could be seen excited people conning carefully the financial page of their favorite newspaper. Here and there were excited groups discussing the question pro and con. The most radical declared in favor of Tom Harris, the more conservative called him a fakir, a mountebank, an unscrupulous stock manipulator. There were a few, however, men who were held in high esteem, who declared that his course was highly commendable.

"We have had too much of this booming of stock," they argued. "It does not help out a security in the least. It turns the stockholders into a lot of speculators. They buy one day, and sell the next. They simply gamble on fluctuations. The pendulum has swung one way — let it swing the other. Matters will soon right themselves."

Now — all eyes were turned towards the stock market. Investors crowded their brokers' offices, outsiders watched the bulletin boards. The question paramount was "Will Harris' statements affect the market?"

The syndicate laughed They had *money* and expected more.

Again they had planned well. Most of the stock had been sold in small blocks to out-of-town investors, previous to listing it on the stock market. It would take time for them to hear of the raid on this security and send in orders to sell. Any stock offered was to be immediately snapped up and when, by such constant and steady buying, this security reached high water mark, the syndicate would unload only to buy in low and again boom this stock.

Fortunately for Nims, before leaving for Boston he had called upon President Stone to speak to him regarding his intended trip. Stone, after talking the matter over, had suddenly spoken of Mabel Consolidated. Nims had many times acted as his agent and given orders to buy and sell various stocks from time to time to Stone's broker. His word carried with the broker practically the same authority as a written power of attorney might with a bank man.

"I want you to watch this security," he had said, then he added, "I am loaded pretty well up to the muzzle with it."

Nims had innocently asked, without considering the question rather impertinent, "How many shares have you got, Mr. Stone?"

The president looked him full in the eye, then, attracted by his frank and honest face, lowered his voice and replied:

"Three thousand."

Nims whistled. "That is some," he ejaculated, "but you may depend upon me to do my best to keep my eyes open. If anything happens, I'll get you by long distance."

When the stock market opened the stock stood listed at 110. For two hours it wavered only a few points, although quite a number of shares passed hands. The syndicate simply bought them in. Why they did this no one knew but Hart.

At 12 o'clock it began to decline rapidly. Nims tried long distance to get Stone, but found him out. (He was in Medway.)

Again he stepped to the 'phone and tried to get Medway. Back came the word from the long distance operator, "Wires down."

Nims sought the ticker, calm, cool, collected, to outward appearance, but quivering inside with the audacity of a daring thought. He was about to take a fearful leap in the dark. It meant, if he won, success — if he lost, failure. The rapid drop of this security caused the market to be flooded with selling orders, but they were only in small blocks.

Suddenly the market rallied,— the security rose higher and higher. Orders piled in to brokers to buy, buy, buy.

Investors who had sold their holdings instructed brokers again to buy for them. Never in the history of the Street had financial men noted such a phenomena. It reached 110, passed it, and soared on to 140,

Nims dropped the tape, stepped to the desk and wrote on a slip as follows:

"Sell 3,000 shares Mabel Consolidated.

CHARLES STONE.
H. Nims, *Attorney.*"

and passed it to the broker.

The broker gasped, "Do you mean it, Mr. Nims?"

"I do," replied Nims, his voice quiet, but his brain burning with excitement.

"You are mad — mad," exclaimed the broker. "Mabel Consolidated will reach 200. Are these your orders?"

"They are my orders," replied Nims truthfully.

"When can you deliver?" queried the broker.

"To-morrow noon," he replied. "I want certified check in exchange for stock."

"Very well," replied the broker, and Nims snatched his hat and left for home.

CHAPTER XIX.

By the Hand of Nims.

After President Stone had received the message from the local operator to the effect that all communication with Boston had been cut off, he appeared like a man in a dream.

He allowed his daughter to lead him to supper and wait on him as she would a child.

She could not understand what the trouble was and to all her questions he simply shook his head, saying it had been a very busy day and that he was not feeling very well.

He stumbled through the meal, spilled his coffee, dropped his fork a number of times, and otherwise appeared unnerved and agitated. When he rose from the table he said:

"Helen, I want you to 'phone down to the *Times* office and have their last edition sent up to me as soon as it is off the press. Have it sent by messenger boy at my expense," and he went out doors for a walk in the cool air.

When he returned at almost 7 o'clock he noted a light in the library and glancing in saw something that startled him.

Helen had a copy of the *Times* — doubtless the last edition — and was carefully removing a single sheet.

It was some special insert. On the other side of the room a fire was blazing cheerfully in the large open fireplace, giving a cheery warmth to the whole house.

In a moment this shrewd character reader had read the mind of the girl.

There was something on the page she did not want him to see, and she was removing it to burn in the grate.

Quick as a flash, and as noiseless as an Indian he crept into the house and grasping the library door, rushed in just as Helen tossed the page into the fire. She turned around, saw him, read his purpose. Extending her arms she cried:

"Father, don't read it! Please don't. It will only make you feel badly."

He realized in that moment her love for him as he had never before.

"Daughter," he said, and his voice was quiet and firm, though his face was very white. "I am prepared for the worst — and must."

He pulled the bit of paper out as the flames began to blaze about the edges, and going to his favorite armchair close by his desk, slowly opened it. There in startling headlines he saw:

"Tom Harris
Wins
In His Fight Against
Mabel Consolidated Copper
Which Drops From 140
To
80.
Thousands Ruined."

He carefully read the whole story. The history of the fight. The decline of stock, the rally, that soared it up to 140, then an hour before the market closed, the fearful panic.

"It was precipitated," said the writer, in summing up the matter, "by some mysterious party suddenly unloading a large block of stock on the market. We have every reason to believe that the syndicate themselves bought in many shares when the price quoted was at the lowest, figuring to profit on sudden rise.

When, however, this block was thrown on the market, they became frightened and dumped their own holdings in. This created a panic, the like of which had not been seen for years."

"Daughter," said President Stone, talking as in a dream. "I am ruined. Under great pressure I was induced to put all the money I could rake together into this deal — and — it is gone. I did this more for your sake than for mine. I had to work long and hard for my money and wanted you to have plenty. I did not know how long I might live and could not bear to think of you battling alone with the world, so —" his voice broke, "I ventured and have lost. However, *all* is not lost, for each

year I have laid away something for you. I am glad of it now, for although I have still my salary as president to live on, we are poor, and this is the disappointment of my life." and the strong man bowed his head in sorrow.

"Never mind, papa," cried Helen, seating herself on his lap as she had when a little tot, and putting her arms about his neck. "We will be happy just the same."

Just then the electric bell rang loudly and insistently. The servant answered the summons and the next moment Nims rushed in, hatless, his coat torn, a black bruise on his forehead. The man held out a tray for his card, but Nims pushed him aside and bolted into the room.

"Gad!" he exclaimed. Then he stopped and took in the little scene and began to laugh merrily. The whole room seemed to brighten under the influence of his mirth, then suddenly his face grew more serious.

"Mr. Stone," he said, "I did an awful thing to-day, but I did it because of affection for my old employer. I learned in a restaurant of a dirty deal in stocks and unable to get you on account of a break in the wires, sold out your holdings in Mabel Consolidated." Then he told the whole story. The president rose and grasped Nims' hand with tears. "It was risky, but I more than appreciate your jeopardizing your future for my sake."

Then he looked the young fellow over.

"What has happened to you, Nims?"

Nims grinned. "Guess those fellows wanted to stop me making that delivery. I was followed, and two toughs tried to knock me down, but," with another grin, "you remember I used to be champion boxer in college, and I guess they are still sprawled out there behind in the road."

"I see — it's the syndicate," exclaimed President Stone. "They bought the stock and didn't want it delivered to the broker, so they could claim the check by default."

"I guess the check is in his safe all right. Give me your certificate and I'll take the next train back and be the first man on hand in the morning."

"My footman shall go with you," declared the president, and he insisted so strenuously that Nims had to accept. Helen followed him to

the door and laying her hand on his arm, turned a pair of really anxious eyes towards him.

"Take good care of yourself, Harlan, won't you," then she added, "for my — my sake."

"Helen," said her father, as she returned to the library, "if God ever made a man, Nims is one. He has been willing to risk much for me, and shall not lose by the deal. One-half of my profit is his. He has a small check account in the bank and I shall add a deposit to it tomorrow. At the end of the month when he gets his pass-book, he will wonder what's struck his balance," and he chuckled with glee.

CHAPTER XX.

Briggs and Walker Again in the Lime-light.

Nims was completely worn out by his labors of the last three days, and on his return at noon from Boston went immediately to bed to make up the sleep he had lost. He never opened his eyes until 9 o'clock the next morning. Hastily dressing, he descended the stairs and found his mother waiting breakfast for him.

"Good morning, Harlan," was her greeting, "you have been away so much I thought I would wait and eat with you this morning."

"It is very kind of you, mother dear," replied her son, kissing her affectionately, "I'll try to be a good boy and be prompt hereafter."

Nims had one bad habit. Before sitting down to breakfast he always went to the front door and got a morning paper, which he glanced at as he drank his coffee. During the days following the bank robbery this habit had grown on him. The *Times* lay by his place this morning, and as he sipped the fragrant Mocha he glanced over the headlines on the front page. Suddenly he leaned back and laughed.

"Mother," he cried, "listen to this!"

The item was headed:

"Detectives Briggs and Walker
Obtain Valuable Information
from
Ticket Agent Brown of Granby Junction."

It then went on to announce that the ticket agent at Granby Junction had sold tickets to two men going to Boston on the very Sunday night that the bank had been robbed, and they had asked him to flag the midnight express for them. He had noticed that they acted peculiarly and watched them suspiciously to see if they boarded the train. This he declared they did.

Detectives Briggs and Walker, the paper reported, were now on the track of these people and when interviewed by their reporter, had declared

that there was no doubt that these rascals were now in Boston. Confident of rounding them up very shortly, they had telegraphed the Boston police to be on the lookout for them and requested them to send out "a general alarm."

"Do you suppose, mother dear, that those fellows would be foolish enough to buy tickets to Boston and board the midnight train? Not for a minute. I think I can see through their little game."

That was all the comment he made, but that afternoon he rode on his bicycle over to the Junction.

Thanking the agent for the information he had obtained, he sat down on one of the wooden benches outside the station and was soon lost in thought.

A few minutes later he arose quickly as though moved by some thought, and walked down the track a little way, examining the ground very carefully on either side.

The Fells bordered it on either side with deep woods. He proceeded with marvellous patience to scrutinize every inch of ground. Suddenly an exclamation of satisfaction came from him. He reached down and picked up a small bit of paper, then another, and another, until he had collected quite a handful. Seating himself on the embankment, he put the little pieces carefully together, and the result, when completed, bore on its face the words:

"Good For One Passage
Between
Granby and Boston"

Turning each bit over as it lay, he made out the date of Sunday stamped in full on the reverse.

"So far, so good," said he, "I would not ask for better luck," and still continued his minute scrutiny, descending at length the bank, which shaded off into a kind of swamp. He was rewarded by finding a number of foot-prints in the soft ground. These he examined very carefully, and made a tracing of them on a bit of paper he had in his pocket. He then pushed through the underbrush till he got near the swamp. Skirting this he asked himself, "I wonder how near the road is?" and pushed on till he

reached it. There he found marks of horses' hoofs and the wheel-tracks of some wagon.

"So this was their scheme to throw the detectives off scent! I only regret that it is impossible to follow them on account of the hardness of the road, and on account of the time which has elapsed since he got the clue. These fellows did not go to Boston, but left the train here and are in some nearby town."

CHAPTER XXI.

The Little Dwarf Man Re-appears.

"The Fells" is the name of a beautiful tract of land stretching between Granby and Medway and the other surrounding towns. For the most part it consists of hills, which are covered with a luxuriant growth of oak, maple, chestnut, and pine. Between these hills are situated several beautiful reservoirs, furnishing to the inhabitants of the surrounding towns an ample supply of pure water. The Park Commissioners interested in this nature spot had reserved it for a park, built several beautiful roads through it, placed rustic reats at different distances, and had otherwise tried to improve it and make it more easily accessible to nature-lovers.

During the Fall hunters, under certain restriction, were allowed to shoot, providing they secured a permit.

One afternoon one might have seen a young hunter in shooting jacket, with a hunting dog a this heels, trying to start up some game. It was Harlan Nims. Suddenly his dog took to his heels and, barking furiously, disappeared from view. Like all game dogs, his barks became more frequent, and excited as he gained on his quarry. He supposed it was a rabbit.

Nims slipped two cartridges into his double-barrel shotgun, and started on the double-quick. He soon discovered the dog at the foot of a tree and decided it must be a squirrel, rabbits as a general rule not being tree climbers.

The creature seemed to be chattering away and scolding. "What kind of a thing has the dog treed?" he asked himself, as he recognized by the peculiar noise the animal made that it was not a squirrel. On reaching the spot and looking up, he noticed half-way up the tree in a crotch of the trunk, with all but his face hidden by the foliage, something like the little dwarf he had seen the night of the Dramatic Club's play at Medway.

"I think I have solved the mystery of a certain moonlight night," thought Nims, recalling his ride with Helen. He realized that what he had at

first taken for a little dwarf was a chimpanzee, and ordering the dog home, he pulled out a cracker, held it up where the little creature could see it and said decidedly, "Joe, come down and get some supper."

The little fellow was pretty badly frightened, and peered out to see where the dog was. After some coaxing and doubtless because he was pretty hungry, he descended and ate the cracker with real animal greed. Nims knew that the satisfaction of hunger is a great factor in the management of animals, so he gave him only a bit at a time, in order that they might become better acquainted. When the crackers were finished they were then on the best of terms, and "Joe" even allowed a strap to be passed through the collar he wore. Later Nims took up his gun, coaxed the chimpanzee to his shoulder and carried him away with him. He came out of the Fells near a farm-house. In the field was a young fellow who had been doing some Fall ploughing and was just unhitching the horses preparatory to driving them up to the barn. He noticed Nims approaching, and when he realized what he had, stopped his horses and stared in sheer amazement.

"Hello, Harlan," he sung out, "what in the name of all that's crazy have you got there?"

"Say, Kime," said Nims, coming up close to the ploughman, "I found this little chap in the 'Fells.' If you will help me out a bit there's some money in it for you."

"Come up to the barn," was Kime's laconic response, as he slapped the reins over the horses and started them at full trot. When they reached the place he quickly unharnessed the horses and turned them into their stalls. Then, turning to Nims, he said, "What can I do for you, Harlan?"

"I want you to keep the chimpanzee here," replied Nims, "and let no one know about it outside of your family. If I am not mistaken, he is the little fellow that suddenly disappeared from the Zoo one night. If you can keep this a secret for a few days there's a hundred dollars in it for you. Give him just what you eat, but watch him. Don't let him escape. I have no place at home to keep him, but if you have, you've a chance to make something."

"I have just the place," exclaimed his friend, excitedly, "used to keep pigeons, you know, upstairs, and have a place as large as a small room

all enclosed with wire netting. Pa thought I had better take it down, but if it means some prize money, I'm in it for keeps."

"The reason I asked you to help me out," replied Nims, "was because in this locality the secret won't get out. If I went down to Dahlberg, the bird man, on Main Street, he'd board him all right, but it would get all over town. I'll tell you what I'll do," he added, "you can charge me regular board for him — that is, a fair price, and if he's not the party I think he is, I'm the only one out. But if he turns out to be my huckleberry, you'll get your board and prize money, too."

"Done," exclaimed Kime, extending a huge hand, which the designation of "paw" would better fit.

"Watch him," cautioned Nims, as he moved away, "and remember, mum's the word."

"Sure," was the hearty response of the other.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the Laboratory Again.

Nims spent many of his spare hours in the Fells. Coming home one afternoon and striking the main road from Medway, to Granby, Nims came suddenly upon a small boy leaning against a stone wall fast asleep. Nims looked down on the little fellow with a smile, recalling his own care-free, childish days.

"Hello!" he exclaimed softly to himself. "What's this?"

In the boy's hand was an envelope addressed to a party in Medway. Suddenly a suspicion crossed his mind. He stooped and gently released the envelope from the messenger's grasp, then with a lead pencil he loosened the flap, quickly and deftly.

"The end may justify the means," said Nims, "anyway the secret is safe with me."

It contained a curious message, and in a flash, he had his fountain pen out and the message transcribed on his rather soiled cuff. Another moment and the envelope rested near the boy's hand as though it had been dropped in sleep, and Nims crossed the road and crept into the bushes.

The snapping of a dry twig under the young detective's foot aroused the boy, who yawned, stretched himself, and hastened down the road.

"That boy will come back soon," deducted Nims. "He's had his rest and he'll try to make up time. Guess I'll wait and see where the one who sent the message is."

Taking a small book from his pocket, he whiled away the time for fully an hour, when he was rewarded for his patience by the sight of his little friend approaching in the distance. He came up and passed by, and then it was that Harlan Nim's field glasses aided him. By their use it was a very easy matter for him to follow the boy's movements and yet remain unseen by him. The lad kept on in the direction of Granby till he was within a mile from that town, when he stopped before an old, tumble-down farm-house. A woman answered his brisk knock, and through the glasses, Nims was able to note many points about her face

and figure. Her countenance was decidedly masculine, her figure short and thick set and inclined to stoutness. Facing the house, and at a distance of about half a mile from it is Bear Hill, a part of the Fells, upon which had been placed a small observatory. An idea presenting itself to Nims, he plunged into the bushes and made for this place, and after an hour's work reached the summit of the hill. Sitting in the little summer house he watched the house very carefully through the glasses. The woman came out finally and went to the old well, drew a basin of water, and began to wash her hands.

A few minutes later Nims slipped the glasses into the case, and with a look of satisfaction on his face started in the direction of Granby.

As he mused in his study that evening there came a knock at the door, and in walked — Helen.

"How in the world did —" began Nims, but she interrupted him in her quick abrupt way:

"Kindness of Madam Nims. Have you any objection?"

"Not at all," returned the young man.

"Then tell me what now you have discovered regarding the robbery," she returned. "Left papa at home and said I'd be back in five minutes."

"Here is my first exhibit," replied Nims, "purloined from a little sleepy messenger boy," and he told his experience and showed a cuff on which was scrawled the following:

"Be careful before replying. Edith only admits outrage. Arthur naturally needs correction. Riches tempt Kittie K. So attend my warning. Call immediately on invitation, and no need telling. Very sorry Edith hesitates.

Ever yours,

XENOPHON."

"Some newspaper scandal!" exclaimed Helen, her eyes shining like stars with interest.

"Scandal! Guess not," he returned. "Something, doubtless, more important than that. I think it is some sort of cipher."

"Why, to be sure!" she cried, clapping her hands delightedly.

But the more she looked at it the more bewildered she became.

"It is impossible to guess at it," said Nims. "The only way is to sit down, get paper and pencil and figure it out."

"Let me try, too," she pleaded. So together they sat down and puzzled away. At last Helen gave way in despair and turned to Nims, who seemed in a brown study. He glanced up and asked:

"Got it?"

"No."

"Give up?"

"Yes."

"Well," he said, quietly, "if you promise not to repeat this outside on any condition, I think I can give you the solution."

"I promise," she answered, solemnly and sweetly, in a tone so serious that it turned his thoughts for a moment in another direction and a great yearning came into his heart. The next he was himself, as he said in a low tone, though his eyes gleamed:

"If you read these sentences carefully you will note they seem to be about the same length. That is, they have four words in each sentence. This struck me as peculiar and I wrote down the first sentence and then the second right under. They appear as follows:

'Be	Careful	Before	Replying
Edith	Only	Admits	Outrage
Arthur	Naturally	Needs	Correction
Riches	Tempt	Kittie	K
So	Attend	My	Warning
Call	Immediately	On	Invitation
And	No	Need	Telling
Very	Sorry	Edith	Hesitates
Ever	.....	Yours	Xenophon.'

"In order to fill out the line I supplied even the dash in the second column."

"But I don't see the solution," retorted Helen.

"Read down," suggested Nims, and she did so, and then this is what she spelled out:

"B–E–A–R–S C–A–V–E C–O–N–T–A–I–N–S B–A–N–K
M–O–N–E–Y R–O–C–K W–I–T–H X."

"Bears' Cave" was an unknown quantity, but "Bank Money" certainly appealed to her.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried, "it's a message from one robber to another. It's like a fairy tale."

"And the next thing I found out was that one of the robbers was a man disguised as a woman"— and Nims related his experience from the observatory.

"How did you know that this party was a man and not a woman?" queried Helen.

Nims laughed. "A man to be a successful detective has to be well acquainted with history, past and present. I noticed that she seemed quite clumsy in getting around in skirts and that she toed out exceedingly, which is rather unusual in a woman. A woman generally walks with her feet pointed straight ahead or she may toe in, but hardly ever out.

"If you have ever been to an amateur performance given by some dramatic club where a number of the female roles are taken by men, you will notice this. The man walks about with his toes very much turned out and takes long strides. In fact, a good stage director will notice and criticise this point strongly. I did not base my judgment upon this, however," said Nims. "Just let me read you a little ancient history," and he pulled down an old book and read the following out loud:

"And the Queen of Sheba answered and said to Solomon, the King, 'Of a truth, I perceive thy wisdom is great and thy learning far surpasseth that of all my wise men, my astrologers, my magicians and soothsayers.

'Now let not the King be angry or displeased if I yet put another question to him.'

And Solomon, the King, who hath been called the Wise One, answered and said, 'Whatsoever thou sayest that will I do, and that which thou desirest to know will I reveal.'

Then the Queen of Sheba caused to be brought into the presence of Solomon, the King, the Wise, twenty and five maidens and twenty and five young men, but the fifty that she brought in did she dress all in the raiment of youths.

And the Queen said unto Solomon, 'Of these my children which I have brought with me twenty and five are maidens and twenty and five are youths. Now let the King separate the youths from the maidens and maidens from the youths.' And the King ordered water and basins and towels to be brought, and it was done. Then said the King:

'Set a basin filled with water before each together with a towel.' And it was done. And the King commanded that the fifty wash each one his hands; and some washed their hands, up to their wrists only; but others did push back the sleeves of their raiment and did wash even to their elbows.

Then said Solomon, the King: 'Set aside those who washed to the wrists and those who washed to the elbows.'

And it was done.

Then said the King: 'Behold! Oh Queen of Sheba! The former are the youths of thy Kingdom, but the latter—thy maidens.'"

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Simple Life.

Nims was a true child of nature. He loved both the animate and inanimate.

There was a simple grandeur to him in the rock-ribbed hills and solemn pines, a wondrous beauty in the green fields, running brooks, and the unbroken forest.

But the birds and little creatures of the woods filled his very soul with joy. He loved to study these little creatures which it seemed to him the Good Father of all had created for but one purpose, "to make glad the heart of man."

The writer's grandmother, now gone (God bless her memory), often said that "bright colors were bright smiles," and it seemed to Nims that the brilliant tanager, with his scarlet dress and black velvet wings, the blue jay with his pretty costume, the golden oriole and the robin with gaudy vest were but smiles of the Almighty incarnated in these feathered songsters.

To his ears the chattering bushy-tailed squirrel, the caw of the crows in the trees in yonder pasture land, the twit of the blackbirds, the whistle of the whip-poor-wills, and even the hoot of the night owl was sweetest music.

Whether he was gliding in his canoe down the silvery and silent lake or climbing the hillside, his face whipped by the yearling shoots which challenged his right to press through the uncleared brush or sitting on the moss-covered stones, and drinking from the crystal spring in the Fells that never ran dry, or endeavoring to catch the speckled trout in some dark hidden pool or simply lying under the trees in the wood and watching the blue sky above with the white clouds floating lazily about, he realized the work and boundless love of God. How true is the saying that man made the city, but God the country!

To reach the highest developments, mentally and morally, one must

get back to Nature and learn her ways. No rush, no bustle, no undue haste, but yet a steady, irrepressible movement forward.

Nims had any number of pets. Let us speak of two here: First came his dog, his boon companion on his hunting trips. Many are the times, early in the morning before the sun was up, before the dew was off the grass, while the air was cool and clear and refreshing, and all nature was still, he would steal off in the direction of the Fells with Jack. Another pet was Daisy, his carrier-pigeon. She had taken many prizes, and had been the talk of the town.

At one time, while off with a mountain-climbing club, who had been visiting the Fells, Nims, unable to reach home that night, decided to accept the hospitality of the club and stop at Medway. Attaching a missive to his carrier-pigeon containing a word of explanation for his mother, he tossed her lightly into the air. She circled about as if trying to get her bearing, and then set off in a direct line for Granby. In a very short time she gently descended into the yard and fluttered into the lap of Madam Nims, who was awaiting the home coming of her "boy."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Strenuous Life.

The morning following the deciphering of the message, Harlan Nims put on his hunting suit, to all appearances, for a day's outing. But instead of a shot-gun he picked up his rifle and slipped a revolver in his belt. To this he added a hunting knife and a small tin lunch box. Then, as if not satisfied with his impedimenta, he slung over his shoulder the field-glasses. As he kissed his old mother an affectionate good-bye, she remarked, "Ain't you goin' to take your shot-gun?"

"No, mother," he replied, "rifle to-day, may be bigger game, you know."

"Land sakes alive!" she ejaculated holding up her hands in good old-fashioned surprise, "I believe you're after that fox they seen in the Fells a few weeks ago."

"I am after one kind of a fox," truthfully declared Nims. Then he added, "I am taking Daisy with me and if she should bring a message back, send it to the one it's addressed to. Get Billy, President Stone's boy, to deliver it. He will gladly accommodate you. There is a little map of the Fells in this envelope," he added,— "if any of the park police ask for it give it to them."

She promised, dazed at what this all meant, but before she could question him, he had given her another kiss and hug, and passed out of the door.

Going to the little shed he opened the door and whistled. There was a scratching sound, a flutter of wings and the next moment his carrier-pigeon stood perched upon his hand.

"Daisy,"he whispered, giving her some crumbs he had brought, "I want you to be a good girl and come along with me."

She cooed as though she understood him, then in sheer mischief pecked at his thumb. He played with her awhile, then picking her up, gently placed her in the big, roomy pocket of his hunting-coat and trudged down the road.

"Bear's Cave," he muttered, as he pressed on his way, "Rock with

"SHE SEEMED DAZED AT WHAT THIS ALL MEANT, BUT BEFORE SHE COULD QUESTION HIM HE HAD GIVEN HER ANOTHER KISS AND PASSED OUT OF THE DOOR."

X." Then again: "Guess I'll get there before, anyhow. Thinks everything safe." Then he pondered for a moment and added, hardly above a whisper, "How did Holliston ever tumble to that place? I thought I was the only one who knew anything about it. It's a dandy, and he's a wise one."

"Gad!" he exclaimed,"I'll get the swag sure and — I wonder what Helen will say — and her father." Then he lapsed into silence.

It was a long and tiresome tramp. "Bear's Cave" is situated at the bottom of a ravine, on both sides of which the ground rises up to considerable height. On one side is a rocky ledge, at the foot of which there used to be a dark and deep hole extending into the solid rock for some distance. When a boy Nims had discovered it, and had kept it from his companions when they played Indian. Even then it was hardly noticeable, as a good deal of soil each spring had been carried down the ravine and several young birches had grown up and hidden it from view. But it was in the Fall that Nims discovered it when the leaves were off the trees.

He had seen the birches and wishing to peel off some of the bark had discovered back of this clump of trees a cave.

He cut off some of the lower branches of the trees, crawled in and it became his secret. Later he learned from an old inhabitant that a bear had, years before, been shot and wounded in the Fells and had been tracked to this spot. Hence the name "Bear's Cave." To be sure, the name was familiar, but few people knew of its existence. It was believed to be simply a legend.

The cipher letter showed that some one else now knew about it and the diagram was designed for his confederate.

Certainly the discoverer must have been quick-witted and keen-sighted to have seen it, for the birches had fairly covered the mouth of the cave, making entrance impossible.

As we have heretofore stated, it was a long journey for Nims from Granby to Bear's Cave, weighted down as he was. When he struck the ravine he turned aside to a little bubbling spring and sitting down opened his lunch box, pulled Daisy out of his pocket, gave her first something to eat and drink, and then ate part of the lunch. The rest he carefully put back.

"I don't know but what I may need it later," he added solemnly. Then he wended his way carefully and cautiously towards the location where he had spent so many pleasant times in his boyhood — Bear's Cave.

Nims was part Indian by adoption, and after a careful reconnoitering, decided that no one was in that vicinity. He found that one large birch had been cut down, but so placed back in position that to all appearances it seemed the same as formerly. The man who had done it must have been of pretty good physical proportions, for it took Nims, athlete that he was, a long time to move the birch so he could enter the cave. He carefully concealed his rifle before entering. Then putting his hand in his pocket he pulled out his electric flashlight and on hands and knees crept into the former Bear's Den. The place seemed like a tomb,— the air damp and chilly. By the light of the flashlight he could see the moisture standing on the walls of the cave like huge drops of sweat.

His hands were covered with moisture, and by the damp chill that seemed to creep into his very bones he knew his knees were likewise. He could feel slimy things scurrying about as he advanced.

Nims knew that not very far away the ground slants upward and should be firmer and less soggy. He soon reached this spot and sat down. Now was the time to look for the money. "Rock marked X," he muttered. "I wonder where it is?"

Long he seached, but in vain.

"Surely," said he, "Holliston would have given his chief more explicit directions if it were hard to locate. I must find this at once or I am in a trap."

"What!" he exclaimed, pulling out his watch and noting the time. "Have I been here as late as this?"

The watch said 5 o'clock. He set himself diligently to work. Suddenly he remembered a little jag in the cave that he used to call his "guest room" when he played there as a boy. Curled up snugly therein he would be invisible to any one entering the cave. He crawled over to the point and began to study the place carefully, when suddenly on a large boulder above him he saw a big white X staring him full in the face. For a moment a feeling of intense nervousness came over him. It seemed a sort of paralysis. Could it be possible he had within reach of his hand the

funds of the bank or was the cipher simply a hoax? In a moment, however, he steadied himself, rolled the boulder to one side and there, back of it, came upon a large bundle in a cloth bag. He seized this, opened it, and pulled the bundle partly out. In the blaze of his pocket flashlight he recognized the familiar red sealing wax and stamp of the Second Consolidated Bank, and the partly erased address:

"First National Bank,
Granby, Mass.
Adams' Express."

The thirty thousand, safe and sound, undisturbed by the robbers, was in his possession and he began to picture the enjoyment with which he would return it, when a terrible oath startled him.

Someone was entering the cave.

Glancing around the ledge he unconsciously flashed his light. While it hid him from view, it revealed a face ghastly pale and drawn, but fierce and vindictive — *the face of the opium eater for whom he had been searching — the master criminal.*

Quick as a flash Nims knew he must show that he was armed. While he knew the man was a desperado, yet he would fight him fair, so pulling out his revolver he aimed it at the roof and pulled the trigger. The report shook the cave, echoing and re-echoing. This was warning enough. The ruffian left in short order, and Nims could hear him talking to his pal. He knew every moment was precious. Taking the little missive out of his pocket he placed it around the neck of the carrier-pigeon who trembled with excitement. It read:

"Chief of Police:
Come at once, Bear's Cave. Ravine near Highland Avenue. Mother has diagram. Held up by robbers. Have bank money.
Nims."

"Daisy," he whispered, stroking her gently, "everything depends on you." Facing her towards the light which came in from the opening, he said, almost fiercely, "Go."

There was a flutter of wings. An exclamation of surprise from outside. A curse — a shot — then silence. Had the dove escaped or had she been brought low and was the message lost?

CHAPTER XXV.

The Robbers' Revenge.

Nims now expected an attack, nor was he long in waiting. Getting out of the range of the bank man's fire, the robbers tried to rake the whole cave with their revolvers. Crack! Crack!! Crack!!! went the revolvers, and spit, spat! spat! the bullets as they struck the rocky sides of the cave.

"I ought to be more than thankful," thought Nims, "that this cave has an L to it."

He was certainly fortunate, otherwise he would have been fairly riddled with bullets.

He likewise thought it fortunate that Daisy had been let loose a moment before this fusilade — that is if Daisy had not been shot! But Nims did not return the fire. Said he, "It is folly for me to shoot except to kill or inform those fellows I am still alive."

After a few minutes of rapid firing the robbers waited. Then Nims heard a movement at the mouth of the cave, "They think I am dead," he exclaimed, "I'll teach them a lesson."

Nims raised his revolver, pointed it in the direction of the sound — and then — stopped.

"What a fool I am," he soliloquized. "They can't see me and can't reach me. Why not get a good look at the fellow this time? I could swear it was he — but he had a clever disguise on. Why not be sure?"

He cautiously glanced around the ledge much as the old pioneers used to glance from behind the trees and rocks that sheltered them from the fire of the Indians.

"I'll flash my light full in his face, then fire, and dodge back behind my fortress."

Holding the flashlight out at full arm's length to mislead his opponents, he pressed the button. The next moment he chuckled to himself. "Gad! but they're foxy, wanted to see if I was a dead one or not." When he flashed his light it revealed to him a hastily and crudely made dummy.

The robbers had cut about ten feet off the top of the birch that Nims had found chopped down, had buttoned one of their coats around it, put an old slouch hat on top and taking hold of the trunk had slowly and carefully pushed it into the cave believing that should Nims have escaped their rain of bullets, which they doubted, he would think one of them was attempting as noiselessly as possible to enter and surprise him.

Then our cave-dweller did a foolish thing.

"Guess I'll show them I'm not dead," he exclaimed, impulsively, and aiming his revolver towards the mouth of the cave he fired six shots in rapid succession. He regretted it sorely afterward however.

"Blamed fool I was to do that," he grumbled, "those men are desperate fellows and want to get this money. It's my life or theirs, and I should have aimed to kill from the first. I do abhor manslaughter, but this is in my own defense and that of the community at large, so I would be justified. I know they would shoot me as quick as they would a dog."

And he was right.

Hostilities for the time ceased. But Nims knew it only meant that they were spending the time in planning diabolical schemes.

"Guess I'll get a bite," thought Nims, with a twinkle in his eye, adding, "seein's it's recess time," and reaching into his tin box, he eagerly ate his luncheon.

"Must leave some," he said to himself, as he reluctantly closed the cover. "I don't know how long I'll be here. If Daisy's shot I may be starved out, unless some Park policeman happens to come around. But that's impossible, No one knows of this place but myself and these bank wreckers."

Nims loaded his revolvers, and with a watchful eye ever turned towards the entrance of the cave, braced himself for a long and weary vigil. The place was cold and damp. From his knees down his limbs were benumbed. His hands were covered with slime and the cramped position he was obliged to assume for safety's sake seemed almost unbearable.

"Different kind of place this," he muttered, "when I was a boy. Why, I brought in leaves and dried up the mud and then built a charcoal fire and dried the rocks. I was as cozy as a bug in a rug then, but now —" he stopped in sheer despair. His position baffled description.

Low whisperings about the mouth of the cave again attracted his attention. "Some new deviltry," he ejaculated.

It was true, Several objects were pulled up at the entrance and the two men outside seemed to work with renewed energy.

"Guess they're goin' to wall me up," he said, "so I can't get out. But I can make a noise, you bet, for I've lots of cartridges," and he laughed in his good-natured way. Then he noticed something significant and the heinousness of their plan dawned upon him. He actually felt his hair stand on an end and cold shivers run down his spine.

He saw a small flicker of light that grew brighter and brighter. One of the robbers had struck a match and was about to light the heap of brush, which the light revealed were the objects that Nims thought were simply to be used to stop up the entrance of the cave.

They had planned to *smoke him out or roast him to death*, anything in order to get the treasure he guarded.

Nims thought quickly. He raised his revolver and pointed at the man bent down with his hands closed around the little flickering blaze, and fired. There was a cry of pain followed by a frightful curse. The light was instantly extinguished.

"He's broke two of my fingers," he heard the fellow tell his companion.

"You fool," responded the other, "why did you get in his range."

His companion did better. Keeping out of the sweep of Nims' revolver he procured a long branch full of dead leaves, and lighting it, used it as a torch to ignite the pile.

Nims fired at the weak flickering blaze and succeeded again in thwarting their evil intentions. But the leader showed marvellous patience worthy of a better cause and again tried and failed. Finally he succeeded in this way. He collected a large number of rocks and pushed them in front of the cave. This protected the fire which was made behind and below the rocks. He then built a wood fire of decayed but dry wood, such as old tree stumps, and trunk bark, etc., and then putting on this blaze green bough that he had lopped from the young trees he soon had a thick and stifling smoke pouring into the cave.

"Now we'll smoke you out all right, young fellow," he said with an oath.

The smoke poured into the place in huge billows. Smoke rises and so it filled the upper part of the cave first and then packing in more solid began to reach and stifle Nims.

He bent down low. Then laid flat on his face, attempting to get what fresh air he could, but even that was rapidly being displaced by this new and poisonous element.

"So they are going to smoke me out," thought Nims, "like an animal. They'll keep this infernal stuff pouring in here till I either come out and get shot down or suffocate in here."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Message From Nims.

Madam Nims, about to enter the house, stopped a moment on the flagstone that was placed before the front door and looked anxiously down the road. She was waiting the home-coming of her "boy."

Harlan Nims, so generally prompt, had failed to put in an appearance at the regular time, and she began to worry, thinking some harm had befallen him.

"Surely," she said to herself, "he ought to have let me known before this. He took Daisy with him and she should have been here long ago."

Following this little soliloquy she started to reenter the house, planning to get supper ready. She had the old-fashioned, common sense notion that work is the best antidote for anxiety or fear. Suddenly her attention was attracted by a slight girlish figure approaching from the Stone estate. Her eyes were not so strong as they had used to be, but she believed that the newcomer could be no other than Helen Stone. She loved the girl with the same motherly affection that she had for Harlan.

Like all mothers she thought her son was one of the best of men, and she had hoped that Helen likewise might some day agree with her.

The girl came up in a whirl of excitement, her lovely eyes all excitement, her cheeks flushed with her hurry, and her raven hair tumbled by the breeze. She did not appear very much like the tall, dignified young lady who had received so many compliments at the Dramatic Club in Medway a few weeks ago.

"Oh! Mrs. Nims," she exclaimed, "is Harlan in and have you heard anything more regarding those robbers? You know," she added, "I think Harlan a *wonder*. When those Boston detectives were at my house and Harlan promulgated some of his theories they laughed at him, and even papa smiled, but you know they have come out right so far, and I do believe he is going to get that $5,000 reward and — I hope he does anyway."

Madam Nims listened with interest. She was very proud of her son and enjoyed anything that might be said in his praise. She was very much opposed to flattery, but believed in compliments, providing they were truthfully spoken.

"No," she said slowly, "I haven't heard from Harlan. He went away early this morning and said he was going off hunting. I asked him if he was after the fox that had been seen in the Fells recently and which I read about in the paper, and he said yes, he was after 'one kind of a fox.' He has been gone all day and I have just begun to get a little anxious about him."

"Don't you worry about Harlan," replied Helen soothingly, "he can take care of himself all right," and her laugh rang out merrily.

"Well," replied her elderly companion, with a slight shake of her head, "I don't like to have him get mixed up with this robbery. They're mighty dangerous men and I'm afeared they ain't got much respect for law or order."

"Don't let that disturb you at all, Mrs. Nims," responded Helen. "I know that he will be here before long and then we will see what else he has learned."

Just then there was a flutter of wings and down dropped a white object. It was the carrier pigeon. She lit on the shoulder of Mrs. Nims.

"A message from Harlan," Helen said, and rushed forward so quickly to see what the news was that she almost frightened the dove out of its little life.

Mrs. Nims took the little carrier pigeon in her arms and stroked her gently on her head saying, "There, there," as a mother might say to a baby, "we won't do you any harm, we only want to find out what message you have."

"Oh! look!" cried Helen, and she pointed to a place where the white feathers of the bird were stained a dark color. "She has been wounded."

It was only too true. But they little knew that the one who fired the shot was also the one who was at this time doing his best to capture Nims in the Bear's Cave.

Madam Nims noticed the little envelope around the dove's neck and gently untied it and passed it to Helen. It was addressed to the "Chief

of Police" and marked "Deliver at once." Then Mrs. Nims told Helen what instructions Harlan had left.

"I will deliver the message myself," exclaimed Helen, and she bade Mrs. Nims good-bye, rushed across the fields, ordered the hired man to put her pony in the dog cart and in a few minutes was flying towards Granby Centre.

About fifteen minutes later the chief of police, together with six mounted policemen on horse-back, galloped into Mrs. Nims' yard, and asked her for Nims' plan of the Fells.

The poor old lady was quite overcome. She did not understand what it all meant, but she went and got the map he had left with her and with shaking fingers passed it to the officer.

Then she added, with tears in her eyes, "Don't let anything happen to 'my boy.'" The officer passed his gloved hand over his eyes as he replied in a voice that was cheerful, but nevertheless seemed quite broken. "Don't you worry! we'll bring him home safe and sound," and everyone of the officers as they wheeled saluted the frail, bent little old lady who stood on the piazza and watched them as they rode away.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Race For Life.

"It is a race for life," exclaimed the chief, then added to his companion, "Nims is a mighty bright fellow. Though he has been laughed at and sneered at, I believe he has got the making in him of a splendid detective. I believe he has run those robbers down. Clever chap to think of carrying his carrier pigeon with him and have the message all prepared to send to us. Miss Stone told me the bird had been shot at. That pigeon will get lots of free advertising all right and maybe get another prize at our next Bird Show. We will have to make the bird a sort of mascot same as the eagle is of our country.

"So Nims has all the bank money in the cave with him. Well, he *is* all right," he exclaimed heartily. "I would rather see him get that reward than get it myself."

Never in the history of the county had men galloped so fast through the Fells as they did that night and the hoofs of their beasts reverberated again and again and could be heard for quite a distance.

These dumb animals seemed to realize their part in the game and that much depended upon them for they seemed to strain every nerve to carry their riders with all speed.

When about there the chief pulled in his horse and signalled the others to do likewise. He then gave orders for his men to dismount and they walked down the road; leading their horses by the bridles and making them follow along the side of the road where the grass was soft and acted as a cushion to their feet.

The chief, when he was about upon the Bear's Cave or where he thought it was, suddenly stopped and listened. Like some dog on the scent, he snuffed the air. Then with an imprecation, he exclaimed:

"I smell something burning. These miserable rascals are trying to smoke the boy out of his hole."

Slowly he crept along till at last he saw two figures bending in front of the cave and building a brush fire. Quick as a flash the chief ordered

three men to watch the horses, and taking the other three men with him plunged through the brush and in the direction of the two. He had given orders before to the men with him not to fire "until you get close upon them, unless, of course, they start to run."

Everything would have gone well but for one thing. The chief's horse was by nature very nervous, and did not like being held, but seemed to be as horsemen term it, "heady." When seized by the bridle he would at once throw up his head. One of the policemen in the excitement grasped his bridle with that of the other two horses and he instantly threw up his head with a snort, stamping the ground in rage. This was not lost upon the figures by Bear's Cave against whom the other three officers were leading an attack, and they instantly dashed off in two different drections.

"Shoot!" exclaimed the chief. "For God's sake don't let the rascals give us the slip," but the robbers escaped, aided by their thorough knowledge of the ground.

"Jim, we must get the boy first," commanded the chief to his forward man who had started in hot pursuit and he led the way. With his heavy club he knocked aside the brush and the blazing embers and going to the mouth of the cave called Nims by name, but there was no response.

"Gad," he exclaimed, "I hope that we're not too late. Bring a rope up, Jim," he said to one of the policemen. They did so and tying a loop of it securely around the ankle of his boot, he said, "I will crawl in and see if I can not get the fellow. Give me your flash light. If I don't come out in a few minutes, just pull me out. My! but this smoke is thick," and he plunged in.

A few minutes later he gave the signal and they pulled him out. He held in his arms the unconscious form of Harlan Nims.

"Peter," he said to one of the older patrolmen, "see what you can do for the lad."

Nims had some object grasped tightly to his breast which it was impossible to remove. It was held in a grasp of *iron.*

The chief examined it as well as he could and by the seals saw that it was the money that had been stolen from the First National Bank of Granby.

"Plucky little fellow," exclaimed the chief, "he thought more of that cash than he did of himself."

Nims, after considerable exertion on the part of Peter, recovered. His first movement was towards his belt for his revolver, but the chief had removed it.

"So you thought, old man, that we were the robbers, eh?" he said, as Nims opened his eyes. Harlan sat up and laughed.

"You did get word, after all," he said, in his good-natured way. "I guess you came just in time," he added solemnly. "Guess I did not fall asleep more than two minutes ago. Got the fellows, have you?"

"No," replied the chief, "wish I had. Could you identify them if you saw them again?"

"Yes," responded Nims, slowly and a little stupidly, for he had not as yet got over the effects of the smoke. "I can do it, and I can tell you where you can get them — at least one of them and I have got the proofs at home."

As they approached the house the chief of police asked courteously, "Have you anything for me to do, Mr. Nims, any arrests?"

"Yes," replied Nims, "I want you to arrest immediately ————" he stopped and whispered a name in the old chief's ear. The latter started.

"Surely you are mistaken, Mr. Nims."

"No."

"And have you proofs?"

"I have."

"Then I'll do it."

"The best time would be tomorrow," cautioned Nims, "he did not think any one could see through his disguise and would not think of quitting the town."

"And the other man?"

Nims spoke so all could hear.

"Arrest in the last house out of Granby on the Ravine Road the woman I spoke to you of some time ago. That is, *the man in woman's clothes*. I think you will find him there, but as an added precaution send out a general alarm for the arrest of a man with two broken fingers on the left hand. You can't miss him."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Nims and the Reporter.

The doctor had given Nims orders to keep in the house for a few days. His face was worn and haggard. His eyes were in a bad condition due to the effects of the smoke. His head ached and the evil effects of his siege had produced a feeling of nausea. Added to this, quite a severe cold had set in, caused by exposure to the damp air of the cave.

It was at this time that Nims' splendid physique stood him in good stead. His physical being laughed at the attacks of fever and disease.

"You're a lucky boy," declared the doctor, as he closed his watch and removed his fingers from the young man's pulse. You ought to be thankful for the gift of such a splendid constitution."

"Just stay indoors", he added, "take this medicine, and we'll have you as well as ever before long," and with this parting advice the doctor left.

A few hours later the bell rang and Bangs, the *Granby Times* reporter, came in.

"How are you, old man?" he exclaimed, "just dropped in to see you a moment and see how you are coming around."

"That's what all you fellows say," replied Nims, with his usual hearty laugh, "and then you interview us for two or three hours."

"Honest Injun!" exclaimed Bangs, "I'm not here for an interview. Why should I? I've written you up and the whole town is wild over your exploit. We had to get out three extra editions, press been running two days steady. Couldn't wait to see you," he added, "and it was such a scoop. Think of it — a local paper beating out the big Boston dailies. Struck the chief soon after he brought you home, Gad! he couldn't say enough in praise of you. Said you had the nerve of men who have seen forty years' service."

"Your paper will be called one of those 'yellow journals' if you keep on," responded Nims with a smile, "but for Heaven's sake read me what

you have written so I can refute all the statements at once. My glimmers have gone back on me or I would myself."

Bangs was very proud of his work and boasted of his ability as an "ink-slinger" so he pulled out a copy of the *Granby Times* and begun to read his account in a most dramatic tone.

It was headed:

"NIMS TURNS THE TRICK ON BOSTON DETECTIVES.
BEATS THEM AT THEIR OWN GAME
GETS ON TRAIL OF BANK ROBBERS.
FINDS BANK FUNDS.
THE FIGHT IN BEAR'S CAVE."

It was a most lurid account and smelt of the cheap dime novel. It described Nims starting out on hunting trip for "big game," his striking the trail and following the footprints of the robbers to Bear's Cave, the message sent by the carrier pigeon for relief while he held them at bay, Miss Stone's hurried drive through the streets of the town to the Police Station, the rush of the posse of officers to the rescue at Bear's Cave, the attack, the flight of the robbers, the rescue.

Then followed the comments of different interested parties — interviews with the chief of police and the different members of his staff, and talks with the cashier of the bank and President Stone of the same institution. To the last statement Nims listened with real interest.

It was, no doubt, the only truthful statement, for the president had furnished a typewritten one. It read:

"I have and always have had the highest regard for Mr. Nims. Not only has he been a valued assistant in the bank from the first, but outside has been of great help to me personally. He looks at everything from a broad view point, he grasps situations quickly. He is a man of action with remarkable intuitive faculties, which enable him to solve the complex things of life as readily as most men do the simple ones. Recently he rendered me a service that will make me his lifelong friend. I consider him an honor to the community."

The account wound up with a slap at Boston detectives, made very odious comparisons, and finished with this significant statement:

"It is believed that Mr. Nims holds the key to the situation which will lead to the identification and arrest of these desperadoes. Startling developments are expected shortly."

"Now, just before I leave," said Bangs, "I wonder if you have any further information you could give me?"

"I've been expecting that from you," retorted Nims, and then with his infectious laugh, "why do you ask me? You seem to know more about this matter than I do, judging from these lurid accounts."

"But you must know who — " queried the reporter.

"Perhaps I do and perhaps I don't," interrupted Nims, "but that will come later."

And that was all the satisfaction the reporter could get.

CHAPTER XXIX

For the Sake of One.

Nims leaned back in his study chair again and in a moment was fast asleep. He must have slept there for hours, for when he awoke he heard the clock strike five.

"Just about this hour two days ago," thought Nims, "I was in a peck of trouble. Perhaps something may happen now."

No sooner had he finished this mental observation than the door-bell rang. He heard his mother greet someone, a door close, and then silence. A little later he heard steps in the hallway, the faint clinking of china, preceded by the aromatic smell of toast nicely browned and the cheering fragrance of freshly-made tea. Then someone opened the door of his room. He was too tired to turn his head, but he said to himself, "Mother is so good. She has not forgotten me. That is always the way — my supper before hers." He heard the table moved gently towards him and thought how nice it was when one was too tired to open one's eyes and yet be conscious of the little sounds that indicated thoughtfulness and loving care. Some one was bending over him and then —

"Harlan," said a sweet, mischievous voice, "Harlan, supper's ready."

He opened his eyes in amazement. He knew *that* voice. It was Helen's.

"Why! where did you come from?" he exclaimed in surprise. "I thought — it was mother."

"I'll call her," she retorted, pursing up her cherry lips with a mock grieved expression, "seeing you are so disappointed."

"No, Helen, don't — I — want you," he said, the tears coming into his aching eyes as the full purport of his words dawned upon him. "You know I don't have you to supper very often," he added, with a smile.

"Very well," she said, appearing relieved, "I didn't want to intrude. I was rather bold to invite myself."

"You are always welcome," he said, and added again, "always," and the look that accompanied the last word brought a glow of color to Helen's cheeks. She was glad the light was not turned on.

"I told papa," she said, after she had placed a chair for herself on the opposite side of the little table, "that I should take supper with you. Of course I felt rather timid in ushering myself unasked into the presence of the celebrated amateur detective, Mr. Harlan Nims, whose name has appeared in almost every newspaper in the country, but —"

"Why?" he questioned, with a dreamy, far-away look in his eyes.

"Oh, I always feel embarrassed in the presence of greatness," she responded, roguishly.

Nims laughed — a full, boyish laugh.

"Are you sure you are in such a presence, Miss Stone?" he asked, still smiling.

"I wish you would call me Helen," she requested.

"Then you must call me Harlan," he insisted.

"But I supposed that since you become so great —"

"Great fiddlesticks! I never became so."

She made a little gesture of deprecation, lighted the lamp, and they sat down to supper. She chatted away, poured the tea out of the little silver teapot, cut his buttered toast up into squares, opening up some jelly she had brought from home to spread on it. She didn't eat very much herself, not much more than a bird would or some other creature that had wings, thought Nims, forgetting in turn to eat. She had to call his attention to the fact. He seemed to prefer to watch her, to listen to her chatter and hear her silvery laughter. He acted as though he was in a dream, and did not dare to speak or move lest the vision before his eyes might suddenly fade away.

"You haven't eaten any at all," she exclaimed, as she packed up the dishes.

"I'd rather hear you talk," he said simply, and then added, "I wish you'd sit a little nearer. It's hard for me to talk — doctor doesn't want me to very much."

She moved her chair closer.

"Do you know," she said impulsively, "I am awfully glad you bested those detectives."

"Are you?" he asked.

"Yes, I am, and they all laughed at your theories, all but *me*."

"THERE WAS A FLUTTER OF WINGS, AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE FROM OUTSIDE, A CURSE, A SHOT, THEN SILENCE."

"I am grateful;" his look proved it.

"Did you know I carried Daisy's note to the chief?" she added.

"That's what was in the paper," he said. "I did not know how true it was."

"Yes, I was talking to your mother and Daisy came fluttering down with the note. I just ran home and got Billy to hitch up the pony and, my! how he went for the police!"

"Did you know, Helen," he said, slowly and solemnly, "that you saved my life?"

"Your life!"

"Yes, a few moments more and it would have been all up with me. The rascals did their best to shoot me, but a cleft in the cave saved me. Then what did they do but try to smoke me out. The police came just in time."

Her beautiful eyes were full of tears, her lip quivered as she asked, more to herself than to him, "Oh, if they hadn't come?"

"I wouldn't be here," he answered quickly.

"But why did you risk your life?" she asked tremulously.

"For one purpose."

"To capture the robbers?"

"No."

"To get the money?"

"No."

"To win the $5,000 reward?"

"No."

"To win"—she was about to add "success?"

"No, Helen," he said, brokenly. "It was to win *you*."

Her head sunk lower and lower till it rested on his shoulder. He reached out his hands and grasped hers and folded them about his neck. She did not resist. Then he said in a low, tender voice:

"Helen, I have always loved you. From the very first I declared that you belonged to me, but when I returned from college I saw a change, not in your attitude, but in your position in the world. Your father, during my absence, had made considerable money. He was rich. I was poor. He looked with more favor upon the young men who had money. They

L. OF C.

were the ones whom he would naturally deem eligible for his daughter's hand. When the bank robbery happened I saw my opportunity to make some money. Detective work has always appealed to me. Deductions and analysis are the very breath of my life. I saw a chance to try for the reward offered, but it was a greater reward I worked for. When in Boston, I got tips of a crooked stock deal. Most of them seem to start from there and, taking the chance of getting into serious trouble, I sold out your father's stock on my own responsibility as it was going down. This belief was based on information I had gleaned by hard work. I won for him. All this desperate effort was not for glory, praise, monetary reward — but for you, dear."

The little head raised itself from his shoulder, the pair of arms tightened their grasp around his neck and a pair of lips timorously pressed his, as a sweet, small voice said, "Harlan, love, it was not necessary to do this to *win* me. My heart has always been yours."

CHAPTER XXX.

Identifying Criminals.

A week later Harlan Nims was called up on the 'phone by the chief of police: "I have arrested parties that you asked me to and would like to know if you are ready to identify."

Nims replied, "I am under the doctor's care and he has forbidden me to leave the house, but if you will bring the parties up here, I shall be glad to identify them and to give you, in full, my deductions. I would suggest that you bring them to-morrow as I want to get all the necessary data together."

This was agreeable to the chief.

Nims then called up on long distance the manager of the Boston Zoo and had a short talk with him. He promised to be present on the following day.

Next morning about ten o'clock quite a crowd called upon young Nims which included President Stone and his daughter Helen, Cashier Preston, and Bangs, the reporter of the *Granby Times*. A little bit later the chief of police, with two other patrolmen, rang the door-bell and were ushered into the parlor and sent up word that they had the prisoners with them. Nims, after arranging all the evidence on his big table in his den, leaned back in his morris chair and gave orders to have the men brought in. As they entered, Nims' friends gave an exclamation of surprise. The first man that attracted their attention was tall and rather fine-looking, with gray hair, sharp features, and deep-set, dark, brilliant eyes. It was Franklin Graves, broker of Medway.

Behind him came a short, swarthy, thickset individual with rather dark complexion.

The chief said, "Mr. Nims, can you identify these two men as connected with the robbery of the Granby National Bank?"

"I can," quietly responded Harlan.

"You will then proceed to make public your evidence."

"It will be necessary for me to begin at the very beginning and give

you a few of my deductions and a few of my discoveries," replied the amateur detective.

"The recital of my tale," continued Nims, "will prove conclusively how unprincipled some stock manipulators are, how unfitted for high positions of honor some Congressmen are, how unscrupulous some 'note shavers' are and will make known the methods adopted by bank breakers. The man who planned the robbery which resulted in the murder of the watchman, was a master criminal whose record and whose photograph you will find in the rogue's gallery under the number of 22,783. He has been searched for in almost every country in the globe and is wanted by the police in nearly every large city in the United States. By his quiet, unassuming ways, his apparent generosity and open-heartedness he has won his way into the hearts of the people wherever he resides, and the least breath of suspicion against his moral character would be most indignantly denied. That man is none other than the one whom you have arrested, Franklin Graves, a confirmed opium-eater, and the man who, disguised as broker in Boston, is the brains of one of the biggest syndicate of rascals doing business all over the country. His ability in this line proves him a genius worthy of a better cause than that of robbing banks and murdering watchmen.

"Another one not directly connected with the bank robbery but morally responsible for the plundering is one who holds a position of respect and honor — the gift of the people of his district — who have looked up to him as a man of unimpeachable integrity and trustworthiness not for a moment to be doubted.

"He has used his high position for the sake of manipulating a very ordinary security until it had attained an unreal and inflated value, his plan being to unload on the market and rob the people of hundreds of dollars.

"His scheme was simply one for his own enrichment. To further this he involved thousands of people in his district, among them a number of prominent bank men. That man is none other than Congressman Hart, who represents your district at Washington, D. C. His plan would not have been discovered for years if it had not been blocked by that

noted outside operator, Tom Harris, who gained inside information and at once began an attack upon this security. Tom Harris, I believe, is as square as a die, and this recent move of his shows conduct most praiseworthy.

"The syndicate known to fame as the Mabel Consolidated Copper Company, fearing that the attacks of Harris might precipitate matters, planned to buy in at once all holdings their stockholders ordered their brokers to sell. This necessitated an immense amount of immediate cash, to secure which every money-lender in Boston and New York was interviewed. The syndicate, still feeling they had insufficient funds to finance the scheme and unwilling in their greed to let in any others to share their immense profits, at last interviewed a notorious money-lender, A. Levy, of the firm A. Levy & Low, in their own city.

"His terms, of course, were not easy ones, but as they needed money, were finally accepted. I suppose Levy himself was in a quandary where to raise that amount, but the question solved itself this way. While depositing at his bank he heard one of the clerks mention the fact that a large shipment of bills was to be made to the Granby National Bank that evening. On his return to the office he had some conference with Franklin Graves, and no doubt innocently mentioned the fact of this big shipment of bills, at the same time mentioning his need of money. While he is too cautious to do anything that might implicate himself, he is too greedy to let an opportunity go by which might benefit him if the risk were assumed by another.

"When Mrs. Stokes was robbed, this gentleman — pointing to Mr. Graves — was the one who turned the trick. He was very nicely disguised, but I remember him not only by his height but by his general appearance. Of course, I had to get more evidence and I believe he simply came in to spy upon the bank. He had been informed of the shipment of bills to that institution, and wanted to find out the best means of breaking and entering. I believe he simply took advantage of his opportunity as I have stated before.

"That night when I went into the wash-room to clean out the ink-well which I used on the books, I picked up a small, sharp instrument, a hypo similar to those used by physicians. I simply laid it away without any

comment. Saturday the watchman is supposed to wash up the floors and otherwise clean up the bank, and in examining the floor Monday I discovered a little vial containing a solution of morphine. I was looking for that. This was to me absolute proof that the man who had been in the bank Saturday also was present Sunday.

"These are the instruments of a morphine fiend. I believe that a glance at the face of that gentleman," pointing to Mr. Graves, "will convince you that he is such. After looking over the bank and getting the lay of the land, he was ready for business. Unfortunately for him, his most trusted and daring lieutenant was recognized by a Boston detective and arrested as he was about to take the midnight train from Boston to Granby. The other members of the gang were more fortunate. Upon examination of the blood found in the bank under the microscope the corpuscles showed that it was that of some member of the ape family. The corpuscles of this animal are like in shape to those of man, but differ slightly in measurement. While in my study by chance I cut out a clipping regarding the disappearance of Joe, a certain intelligent chimpanzee who had been exhibited at the Zoo. I now thought I was on the track of the third party, for who could control him but his own trainer. I got a description and it tallies perfectly with this fellow (pointing to the other prisoner who sat there sullen and defiant). My deductions regarding Joe proved true as I located him soon after in the Fells.

The fact that there were no marks of a ladder at the rear window and that it was impossible for any one to be let down from the roof by the rope as the roof of the house was conical in shape, proved to me conclusively that the monkey climbed up the building to the window and by use of a case knife opened up the window and gained entrance. The watchman, however, saw him and tried to stop him by stabbing but the monkey enraged by this change in the program made him pay his life as a forfeit. He then descended the stairs, opened the main door and the robbers came in and finished their work."

"How did the watchman meet his death?" exclaimed all, as Nims paused for a moment.

Nims rose, went to his safe, got something and slowly held it up that

all might see he held a small box with a flap of wood over one end. It was the identical one he had shown Helen a few nights before.

She noticed, however, he handled it carefully and that it was strongly tied up with stout twine.

"This case," said Nims, "might be called the *Mystery of the Sandal wood Box.*"

Stepping to an empty table he brought a glass case not unlike that used as a show counter by store-keepers. Excusing himself he stepped out to his rabbit hutch and brought in a small rabbit and put the little fellow in the case.

"I hate to do this," he said solemnly, for by nature he was very tender-hearted.

Then he carefully cut the cord around the box shook it violently and placing the end with the wooden flap inside of the glass case released the shutter.

To the surprise and the horror of some out of it flew as in a rage a great spider, piebald in color, a dirty reddish and yellow and mottled with black.

He rushed ferociously at the rabbit and sunk his fangs into the poor little creature again and again.

"This," said Nims, "is a spider of the trap-door family which is found in one of the South Sea islands. Prof. Clemens of the Natural History department in Harvard informs me he knows of only one other species and that he saw in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. It, however, was much smaller and inferior in every way. They built in the ground little trap-doors like the ones most commonly known, but this variety prefer birds and small animals to flies. When disturbed and thoroughly aroused they have been known even to attack men.

"This creature I found at the top of the cell where the little Jew peddler was locked up and I believe it was also the cause of the death of the watchman. This ends, I believe, *The Mystery of the Sandal-wood Box.*"

THE CIGAR BUTT.

A Bit of Clever Deduction.

The purser's face was a study in emotions. Chagrin, anger, mortification, disgust, passed over his mobile face in rapid succession. Surely, there was goodly cause.

It seems that every Friday night the treasurer of the company took this boat from New York to Stamford, Conn., where one of the company's mills was located.

He always carried with him a little, insignificant, black leather handbag. It contained the pay envelopes of the employees of the Stamford Mills.

It was his habit to come aboard the boat a few minutes before the gang-plank was hauled ashore; go directly to the side door that opened into the purser's office; leave the bag containing the cash with him, take the key to stateroom No. 26, which was by custom reserved for him, and, with a sigh of relief, ascend the stairs. Then for a while all responsibility for its safety fell from his shoulders like the scriptural mantle of Elijah, and dropped on the broad ones of Fred Ashton, the purser. When the last stateroom key had been passed out and the little ticket window finally closed, the safe was opened and the bag and other valuables were put therein until the next morning.

To-night it was different. A few minutes after the treasurer of the Franklin Company had passed up the steps there had been some altercation and general mix-up about berths among the steerage passengers. It was the custom of the steamboat company to give away free beds to these poor creatures who could ill afford to pay for staterooms. A numbered slip was given to each, entitling the holder to a mattress, blanket and a sort of bolster pillow. Attracted by the noise and general confusion, the purser had stepped out for barely a moment, slamming the door, as he supposed, behind him, only to return and find the bag containing the Stamford Mills pay-roll gone. No wonder his features showed his varied feelings. He had always prided himself upon his discreetness and caution. This time he registered a flat failure.

There was one consolation, however, the bag was certainly aboard the boat, for when he stepped out of his office the boat had left the dock certainly fifteen minutes before. But how to proceed! A thousand ways suggested themselves; on reflection, they all seemed impractical.

Suddenly a thought — the passenger stateroom list! He ran his stubby finger up the long lines of names, but the longer he glanced over them the more futile he realized was such action. Suddenly he stopped and whistled as he read out loud, "Stateroom Fifteen — Harlan Nims."

"Gad!" he ejaculated. "I'll bet a ten spot that's one of the old boys who was on the eleven when I was captain at Princeton. I could swear that was the fellow who played right guard. He was a bit of detective, too, in college; said he was going to make that his life work.

"Yes, the room was engaged two days ago. That's the reason I did not meet him."

A few minutes later the porter knocked at No. 15 and passed in a card on which was printed:

FRED ASHTON,
Purser.
New York and Prov. Steamship Co.

On the face of it was scrawled in the purser's handwriting the following: "*Nims. Report at once. The captain of the eleven would like to speak with you.*"

Fred had guessed right. The order brought an immediate knock at the purser's door and a mutual recognition.

Nims was tall, with a strong face, though rather too sharp and keen to be called handsome. His eyes were deep-set and brilliant. His nose rather large, his forehead high and prominent, his mouth firm, but pleasant.

Ashton told his story rapidly, Nims meanwhile chewing away at an unlit cigar, with his eyes half closed and dreamy.

When Ashton had finished, Nims asked him a few pointed questions and learned the following facts:

In the first place, the door of the purser's office opened into the main hall, from which the stairs ascended to the cabin. The ticket window was at right angles to the door and opened onto the quarterdeck. Between

the hall and the quarterdeck was a partition with two large swinging doors. The passenger coming aboard and entering the starboard side would, leaving the gangplank, step upon the quarterdeck, march up to the purser's office and secure his stateroom, then facing to his right, pass through the doors and up the stairs. Thus, anyone passing through the doors could not be readily seen from the quarterdeck. It would be very easy for such a one to step into the purser's office, secure what they might and pass up the stairs. The only danger to this would be meeting some one coming down the stairs or entering the hall through the doors from the quarterdeck.

Secondly. He learned that Ashton suspected no one, certainly not the porters, for they had all been busy carrying baggage upstairs, save one who was out on the quarterdeck when the purser stepped out there.

Nims then lapsed into silence again, which, knowing his moods, Ashton did not interrupt. His eyelids were almost closed, though through the slits one caught a brilliant gleam which showed he was fully awake. Ten minutes later Nims suddenly opened his eyes, removed his much-chewed roll of tobacco, yawned and remarked with a twinkle in his eye:

"Well Ashton! So you've got into the pernicious habit you used to warn us about in college."

"What's that?" asked Fred, rather surprised that Nims should forget the all important subject in hand.

"Oh! smoking."

"Smoking!" exclaimed Fred, in disgust, for he had never used the weed, and when captain of the eleven in college had been most strongly opposed to its use by any of his players. "You know I don't smoke."

"Strange," observed Nims, languidly looking around, his delicate nostrils quivering like a hound upon the scent. "I haven't lit my cigar as yet and the room is quite full of cigar smoke."

"Oh, hang your deductions," replied the other. "I allow no smoking in this office while I am here."

"Perhaps so, but the window's rather small and there seems to be no particular draught," responded Nims. "Then, again, if it did we'd find most of the smoke thickest in one corner. On the contrary, it seems pretty evenly distributed around the room. The smoker held the cigar or

laid it down, as I notice the room is full of dry smoke rather than wet. Dry smoke comes from the end of a cigar, the wet variety is blown from the mouth. Any one with a trained sense of smell would note this as readily as you yourself distinguish between the smell of dry wood and wet."

"Look here!" exclaimed Ashton, angrily, jumping to his feet. "What has this smoking to do with this robbery? That's what I want to get at."

"Considerable, maybe," answered Nims. "Let's see —

"Deduction No. 1 — The party who took the valise was of the masculine gender and a smoker, and used it to good advantage. A woman hides behind her fan or handkerchief. A man can cover a good deal of agitation behind a cigar.

"Mr. Burglar follows behind Mr. Victim, puffiing vigorously at his cigar. Mr. Victim calls for his key, so does Mr. Burglar. Mr. V. then wheels about, passes through the folding doors, knocks on the purser's door and drops his bag on the table. Mr. B. meanwhile stands outside in the lobby or quarterdeck (as you call it), apparently listening to some drunken sailor who is amusing a few loafers with his cheap wit. In reality he is slyly watching Mr. V. through the window and sees him deposit his bag on the table. He then mixes up the numbered berth tickets of two Italians and starts a quarrel between the two. He sees my beloved football captain, the purser, rush out of the box office, noting that the door does not slam to.

"The doors connecting the stairway with the quarterdeck I notice, swing either way. I observed that as I came aboard so when Mr. Purser swings out on one he swings in on the other, unnoticed by that individual.

"During all this time he had held his cigar in his hand. If Mr. Purser should suddenly return, why, he would get a puff in his face, masking Mr. B. He enters, reaches for the bag and glances quickly out on the quarterdeck through the window. At the same time he reaches for the bag he unconsciously sets his cigar down. Coast clear, two quick steps and he is mounting the stair.

"No doubt he was aided by some confederate. It is certainly reasonable to presume so. Such a one could more than aid him. He could back up to the window and signal his partner inside: 'All right; go ahead.'

"The cigar, meanwhile, is forgotten, but it smoulders away in a thin, blue line till it distributes itself quite evenly. Walk where you will in this

office the smell is about equally distributed. If it came through the window the natural draught would blow it over in this corner. Then, again, it would not be just cigar smoke, but would be pipe, cigarette and cigar smoke, a composite odor contributed by every gentleman, drunk or bum on the quarterdeck."

Fred Ashton looked in amazement at these rapid deductions.

"Nims," he said, "you're all right! But where's the *cigar?*"

"Where was the bag?" demanded Nims.

"Right here," replied Ashton, "on this table."

"Very good; then your cigar ought to be about a yard away, if my deduction is right. The robber reaches for the bag, extending his right hand. According to the law of opposition, as promulgated by Delsarte, his left hand unconsciously takes an opposite direction. He would rest it on this chair or —

"Hello! what's this?"

Nims stooped down and picked up a cigar butt.

Ashton started, but again his old, cool, logical nature asserted itself. "Nims! You've got the cigar, but where is the *man* who had it?"

Harlan Nims looked long and carefully at the bit of cigar end. He smelled of it, examined the ashes, undid a bit of the wrapper. Then he picked up a deep soap dish from the washstand in the corner, filled it with water, dropped in his little raveling, leaving it to soak a bit. This done, he sought the arm chair and, lighting his own macerated cigar, puffed away in silence.

Again Fred Ashton saw he did not care to be disturbed, so he remained silent. After about an hour's meditation Nims got up, took a bit of paper and floated the cigar leaf upon it as some naturalist would mount a bit of sea fern, and, turning to Ashton, who stood watching him in amazement, said: "Stay here, Fred, till I come back," and left the office.

Fred fixed up his accounts, locked up the safe and waited. Only once he was bothered and obliged to leave the office, and that was to shake into sensibility a drunken fellow who said he was a drummer for a cigar dealer and had opened up an expensive box of cigars in the barroom and insisted on every one taking one. In fact, he had become most insistent in his drunken demands, and Fred nabbed him just as he had pulled a cigar

out of the vest pocket of one well-dressed gentleman and substituted his, adding in a thick voice: "Shay, old fellar (hic), take thish. Your smoke ish (hic) no goodsh." Strange to say, the party attacked rather relished the exchange.

Two hours later Nims dropped in. In his left hand he carried a pipe and under that arm an enormous tobacco box; in the other a bag — the *payroll bag for Stamford Mills.*

The purser's hair fairly stood on end, while his bulging eyes told more plainly than words his utter astonishment.

For a moment he seemed dazed as one in a dream, the next he had sprung forward, only to be waved away by a gesture from Nims.

"Keep cool, captain!" he chuckled; "keep cool! It's in my hand now;" then he added, reassuringly: "Everything is here all right. Lock hasn't been picked as yet."

With a deep sigh of relief Ashton sunk into the nearest chair. "But how —" he exclaimed. "How!"

"Well, Fred," replied the other, laying his prize comfortably near the leg of his arm chair and carefully rolling a slice of tobacco in the palm of his hand and pressing it into the huge bowl with his long artistic fingers, "let's see! It was only a bit of cigar end, but I guess it did the trick. We'll go at it scientifically. Let's see where we left off.

"In the first deduction we discovered the thief was a man and we made a pretty fair guess at his mode of procedure. Now from the cigar we get the following:

"Deduction 2. *An exceedingly nervous man.* About a third of the cigar was chewed, showing the man had a habit of rolling it around in his mouth as he smoked.

"Deduction 3. *A methodical or neat man* — as the ends were carefully cut, not bitten off. This I learned by carefully floating them out on a bit of paper.

"Deduction 4. *A man of some wealth* — or a spendthrift. This I learned when I recognized the brand of cigar. It was, to say the least, a rather expensive one. None but a man of such condition as I have mentioned would use this brand. It is reasonable to believe he had more smokes with him. A fast smoker is usually an extensive smoker. It takes three

cigars to bring to him the soothing and quieting effect a slow smoker will get out of one. He knew he was on a trip. He knew by experience this brand could not be bought aboard the boat. Hence it might be possible to locate your man by looking for another of the same brand.

"Deduction 5. *It was doubtless lit just before coming aboard.* I have bought and smoked these cigars myself and know their shape and length. The part chewed plus the part left unburned deducted from what was its original length would leave only about a fifteen-minute smoke for its owner — for a nervous man even less.

"Deduction 6. *His assistant* (had he one) *could likewise be located by the same brand of cigar.* If he treated him to a smoke do you think his partner would stand for a cheap cigar? Would he not reason that if his chief did not care to share his good cigars with him he might fail to share his booty equitably and want the big end also?

"Finally —

"Deduction No. 8. He had a peculiar habit — he held the cigar on the right side of his mouth instead of the almost invariable position — the left side. This I noted from the teeth marks on the butt. Perhaps the sight of his left eye was defective or he may have had a troublesome tooth on his left side which constant sucking at his cigar would cause no little irritation.

"So you see, my dear Ashton, with such a mental picture at hand it was very easy to pick your man.

"When I left you I suspected an accomplice. If the thief had a confederate with him he would doubtless be watching the purser's office to see what move might be made to recover the stolen bag. I surmised correctly, for as I came out of the office I caught a glimpse of a face peering at me through the glass window of one of the connecting doors. Its owner was on the quarterdeck, to all intents innocently smoking, and lounging carelessly against the wooden partitions, but at such an angle that he could command a view of the main hall stairway and the purser's door. But then again. This might only be a curiosity seeker. I decided to be sure.

"I had planned to ascend the stairway, but changed my mind, and passed through the doors and entered upon the quarterdeck. The man in question at once went into the barroom, on the opposite side. As I

passed through the door I began to berate the steamboat company in general and the purser in particular. Told every one I had ordered a stateroom ahead and found them all taken. Said I had just been in and given the purser a blowing up.

"This was said loud enough so that it was heard all over the boat, and even by those at the bar. Then I drifted in there, ordered drinks for the crowd, and in the confusion emptied my own in the spittoon. This gave me a good look at my man. He was a short, stocky, low-browed fellow, with as evil a face as one cares to meet. But I had caught him off his guard. I stood with my back to one of the large electric lights so I could see his face while he could not see mine any too well.

"After turning around, I slipped out into my room, put on a simple disguise, and playing the part of a drunk, started to descend again. This time I was in luck. As I came down the stairs I looked through the glass doors and singled out my barroom friend. He was talking with some one, but how he had changed. The lounging, careless manner was gone. He was the personification of alertness and devilment. He was talking earnestly, rapidly and spasmodically — and to whom? To the man I wanted — the chief.

"I recognized him at once. Why not? I had already in mind his likeness. A well-built man, careful in dress and deportment — a man with massive head, intellectual forehead, bushy eyebrows, deep-set eyes, aggressive jaw, but restless mouth.

"He was continually chewing away at his cigar, which, as yet, he had not lit, although he held a match in his right hand. Every once in a while his eye would sweep the place, though his head did not move an iota, except when he glanced to the left; then he was obliged to turn it slightly. *That was his blind side.*

"I said his confederate spoke spasmodically. He did. He would look furtively about to see if any one was noticing, and if not, he would hurl some information at his chieftain. But should any eye be turned his way he would relapse into his old indifferent way. When they separated, soon after, he sauntered to one side of the quarterdeck and his assistant to the other.

"This was my turn. I slipped down and entered, as I wanted

to see the kind of cigars both were smoking. It didn't take long to find out. The next move was to locate his sleeping apartments. I knew he'd turn in pretty quickly. I should have to act in like manner. If the bag was in his stateroom he wouldn't let it stay there alone very long. One of the Italians had a violin, and, with the confidence known only to the intoxicated, I asked a loan of it, saying I could play. I borrowed some rosin he had and pretended to run it over the bow, at the same time getting off some of the sickest drunken twaddle I could think of. It caught the crowd. In the general hilarity that followed I rubbed the rosin across the blade of my knife and got quite a handful of it nicely powdered. Then when I started to play I did it so clumsily that the owner of the violin fearing his instrument would be ruined, grabbed it away from such impious hands. That was what I wanted. I staggered over to the corner where the big fellow was and dropped my rosin about his feet. I then took to smoking as fast as I could, taking care to drop ashes in his path. Not very long after his understudy left, bidding all a good-night, and went upstairs to his room. A few minutes later Big-Chief yawned and followed suit. I waited a few minutes and then left myself, with a grand salute from all on board the quarter-deck.

"It was easy work. The rosin fortunately adhered to the heel of his shoe and the cigar ashes on the velvet carpet of the saloon revealed the direction and destination of my 'quarry.'

"Thus it didn't take long to locate his sleeping apartments, room No. 49 — an outside room. With my badge I got the second mate and three deckhands to assist me. I reasoned that his partner had a room next to him. It was either No. 47 or No. 51. I expected a little change of hands, so instructed my helpers to first knock twice on stateroom No. 49, and then, if there was no response, after a few seconds to break in all three.

"This would give Big-Chief time to do his little trick. I crept outside on the promenade, laid down under the window of No. 49, and waited. I gave them twenty seconds to wait.

"It was pitch dark outside. The seconds seemed hours. Then came the knock. No response. Again. This time the window was softly opened and I heard a low whistle. Window of stateroom No. 47 was opened immediately and I saw a bag being quietly passed out of the window of No.

49 in the direction of No. 47. I at once appropriated it. Then came the crash. When I came back to the main cabin they had the bunch nicely handcuffed and 'I had the bag.' "

Ashton sprang forward and grasped the young detective's hand. "How can I ever repay you?" he said.

"You needn't," replied the other. "In fact, I am under obligations to you. I made a cool five thousand on that deal."

"How so?" inquired Ashton, in surprise.

"Why, I have caught one of the cleverest counterfeiters in the country. 'Big Tim,' as he is called. I had my suspicions when I saw him. I think he was planning to leave the country. In fact, he is being looked for now on this continent."

"Your deductions are certainly marvelous! and all on a cigar butt, too!" exclaimed Ashton. Then, musing a bit, "I wonder who that fellow was who was so free with his choice cigars."

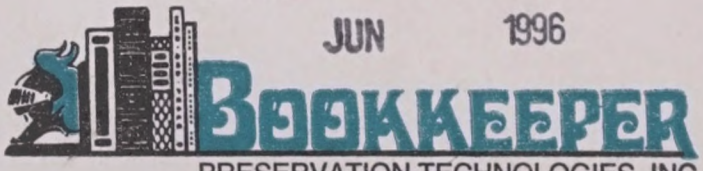
"Oh," drawled Nims, "I know him well, and you do, too, I suspect."

"What's his name?"

"Harlan Nims, American detective."

APR 3 1908

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: JUN 1996



PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
(412) 779-2111